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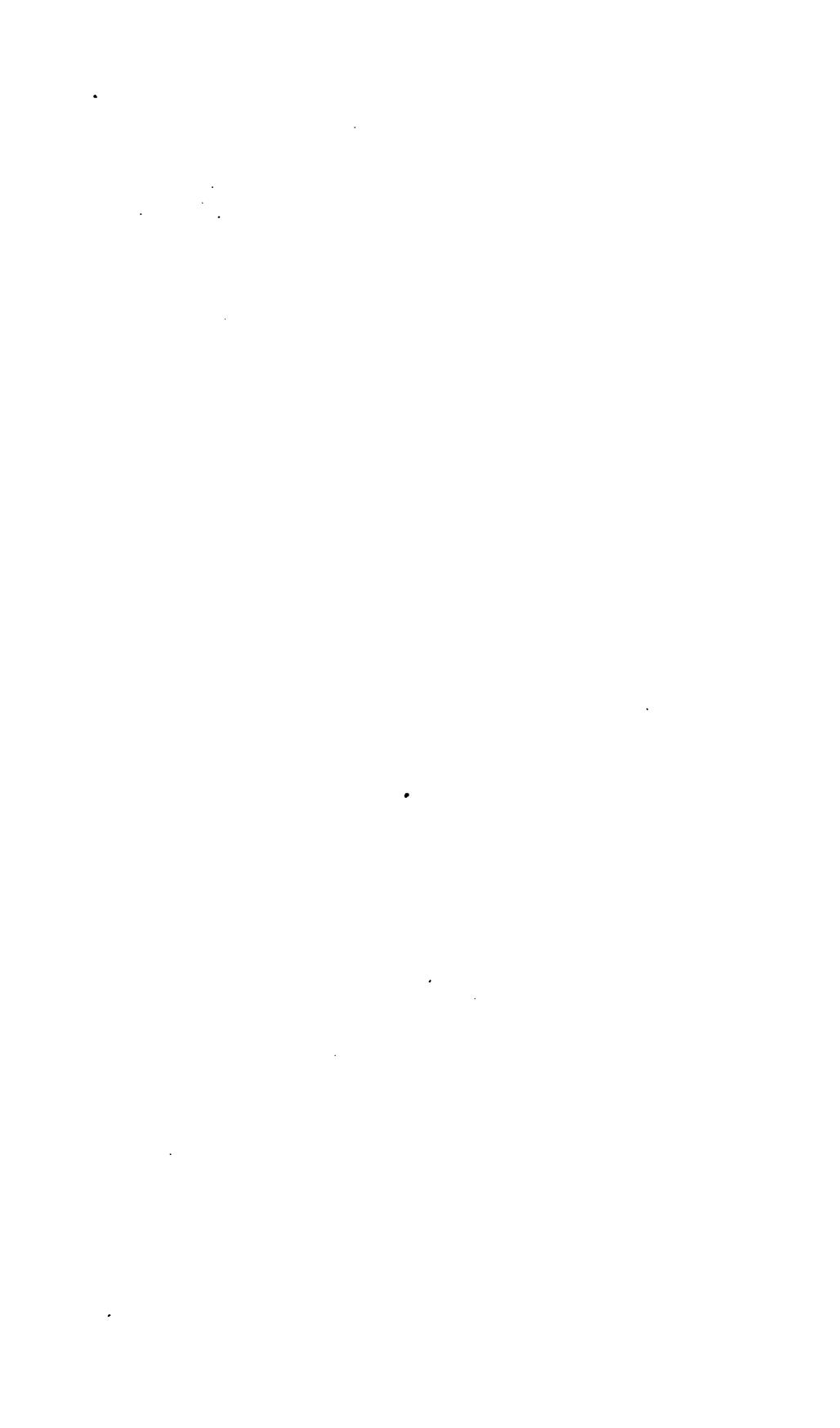
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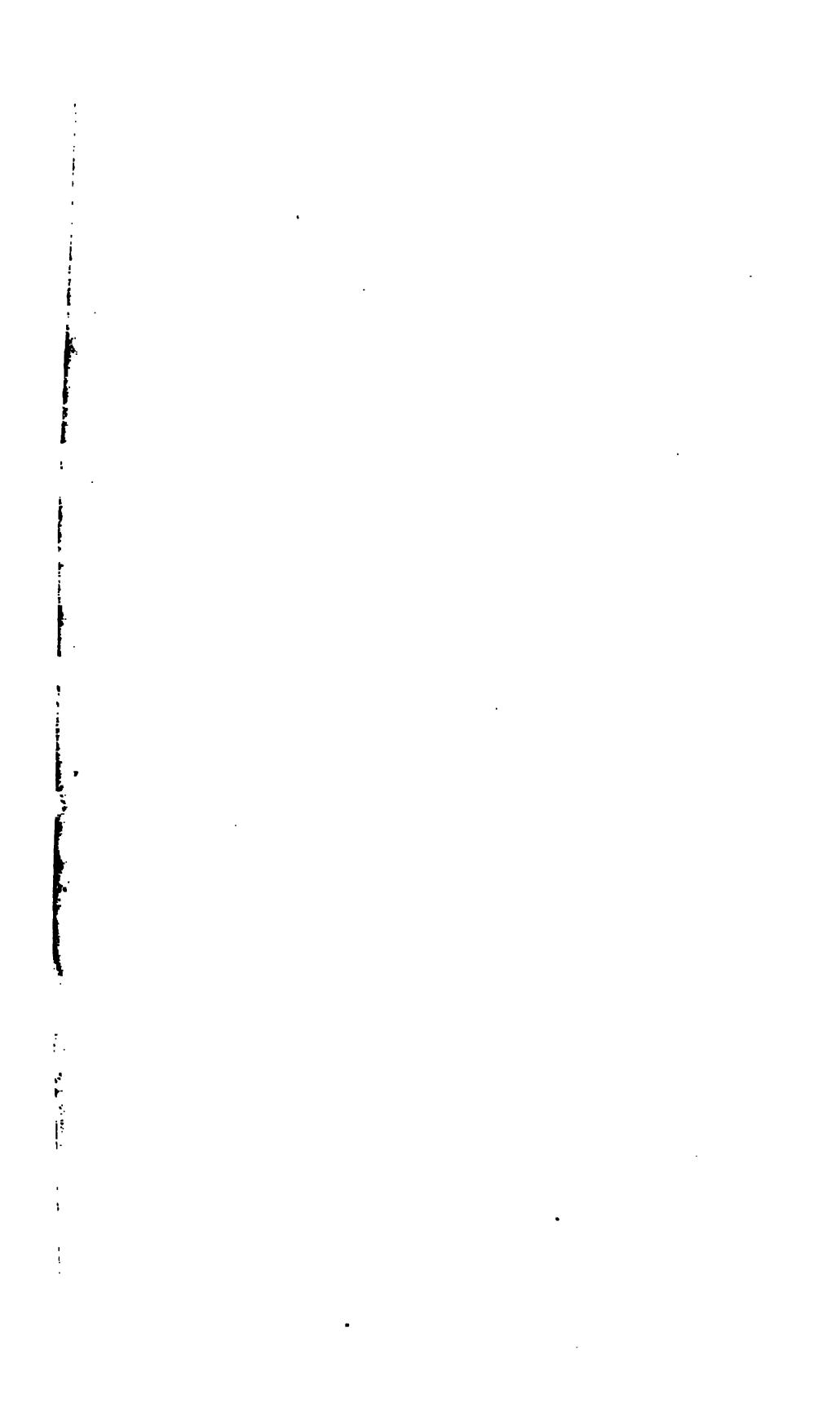
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Illustration

The Flying Dutchman and his crew.

(BRITISH DARLING)

THE

Harvest of men.

(FERN ISLANDS)

A Tale formed upon facts.



A Story in the style of the "Harvest of Men."

LONDON

Illustrated by J. H. C.



G R A C E D A R L I N G ;

OR,

T H E H E R O I N E

O F T H E

F E R N I S L A N D S .

A T A L E .

BY

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

A U T H O R O F " P I C K W I C K A B R O A D , " " A L F R E D D E R O S A N N , " & C. & C.

L O N D O N :

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L O N D O N :
J. C H E N D E R S O N , 18, B A M B E R R Y S Q U A R E .

TO MISS GRACE HORSELY DARLING
THIS WORK
IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR,
AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF HIS
ADMIRATION
OF HER DISINTERESTED AND HEROIC CONDUCT,
ON THE SAD OCCASION OF THE LOSS
OF THE
FORFARSHIRE STEAM-SHIP.

P R E F A C E.

THE public annals of history, as well as the private records of domestic life, can boast of but few instances of female heroism in England ; whereas France, and some other continental nations, have produced from time to time many illustrious examples of woman's magnanimity. The number of English ladies, who have really distinguished themselves in the world of letters, is also exceedingly limited, when compared with that of celebrated French authoresses. These are remarkable facts,—still more remarkable, too, when we reflect that English women are endowed with much less of that frivolity and levity which characterize the French—a circumstance from which we should infer the possession of superiority of mind. But it would almost seem that the very females, who in hours of peace and tranquillity consider the “airy nothings,” which amuse them, as their most important occupations, are the first to start into life and activity at the approach of the slightest danger that menaces themselves, their husbands, their children, or their lovers. Charlotte Corday must not be deemed a gloriously isolated character in the history of French women : she must be regarded as a specimen and type of the whole body of her sisterhood.

But the mode of life pursued by a French woman is totally different from that adopted by an English woman. The former interests herself in the politics of the day with as much enthusiasm as her husband ; she reads the newspapers—criticises the measures of the ministers, or the ordinances of the King—supports a certain party—consults with her husband, or brother, or father, or son, on the best path for a politician to pursue—and discusses the merits of one sect, and the pretensions of another, with taste and judgment. The very female servants in France are well versed in all political matters ; and they seldom fail to run their eyes over the newspaper when their masters have laid it aside. The effects of this masculine study upon the minds of French women can be easily conceived ; and thence originate that firmness in danger, that readiness to plan in the moment of surprise, that universal patriotism, and that calmness in the midst of popular ebullition, which characterize the French woman.

A Frenchman treats his wife as a friend and as his equal in intelligence, in all matters, whether commercial or political. He does not motion her to leave the room when any one calls to "talk upon business,"—those words which in England are an immediate signal for the disappearance of the female. A wife in France, is a friend and companion whose counsel can be relied upon, whose genius and imagination may be referred to with safety, and whose right of suffrage in the domestic circle is as unquestionable as that of her husband. In England a wife is a nonentity in all respects where in France she is treated as an intelligent and trustworthy being, having the privilege of administrating the financial and mercantile affairs of her household or her trade to the same extent as the individual with whom she has entered into a partnership for life.

It is evident that the importance thus attached to women in France, encourages a spirit of emulation and perseverance, having for its object the constant desire to afford proofs that so great a degree of confidence is not misplaced. With these incentives to retain and render necessary the positions they occupy in their domestic circles, French women acquire masculine powers of thought ; and the unwearyed exercise of their intelligence often reveals great talents and brings into play vast abilities which, under opposite circumstances, would have for ever languished in obscurity, like the vein of precious metal that the miners have not yet discovered. The right of commanding passive obedience, in reference to their wives, is too elaborately made use of in England : English women are not admitted sufficiently intimately into the secrets of their husbands : they are placed at the head of a household to administer only the domestic matters of their establishments ; and of the affairs of their "lords and masters"—terms here used without figure of speech—they are invariably ignorant. And yet, were their advice more frequently had recourse to—were they treated as friends and confidants, instead of poor domestic creatures, who ought not to meddle with matters either of trade or politics—I do not hesitate to assert my firm conviction that much happiness and benefit would be the result. I do not believe that the mind of woman is constitutionally weaker than that of man : I maintain that if it possessed the same opportunities of development, it would be equally powerful. Man, proud of the superiority of his physical strength, would also arrogate to himself the pre-eminence of his moral and intellectual capacities. But time will indubitably convince him of his error, and make him aware of the folly and injustice of his presumption ; and he will eventually acknowledge that woman is worthy of being considered an equal and a friend, instead of a slave and an intellectual nonentity.

Next to the demoralizing idea that white men have a right to enslave the blacks, the belief which the English entertain relative

to the necessity of the un-importance of woman is the most unjust and unfounded. If females, from the circumstance of their physical organization, be unable to man ships, construct mighty edifices, support terrible privations in long campaigns, and share all kinds of manual labour with their husbands, no analogy supports the assertion of their intellectual inferiority. The mind, at its birth, is an unformed and shapeless mass, which education and circumstances must fashion. Were a sudden revolution in the order of things to take place, and were it suddenly established as a custom that women should receive the education and initiation of men, and the latter take the places of the former in the intellectual world, the superior facilities of development given to the minds of women would immediately render them as powerful as those of the opposite sex at the present moment. Many a Madame de Maintenon—many a Madame de Staél—many a Charlotte Corday might spring up from the fairer portion of the population of England !

At a period, then, when instances of female heroism are so rare in the British realms, it is with the most unfeigned delight that I have to record one, which, for disinterestedness of motive, and for recklessness of danger in the cause of humanity, is almost without parallel. A young girl dares the most terrible of dangers—advances to the very jaws of death—makes light of the thousand chances of destruction which surround her—and smiles at the fury of the conflicting elements, in the hope of rescuing a number of her fellow-creatures from impending annihilation. Of all perils calculated to intimidate the female mind, those of the sea are the most formidable : but, in the exercise of her duty as a philanthropist and as a member of the vast social body of earthly denizens which only remains united and powerful by individual exertions, did this young girl venture her own life to save that of others. Without the most distant notion of obtaining other recompense than that of her own conscience—did she dare every danger to rescue strangers from a watery grave !

But the noble deed has met with that reward which was never anticipated by the brave girl and her not less admirable father ; and the almost unparalleled heroism of their conduct has been duly appreciated by the whole British nation.

The following extracts from the newspapers will probably interest the reader :—

“ The Queen has been graciously pleased to present the sum of Fifty Pounds to the fund now raising for the reward of the Darlings, and the North Sunderland boatmen, for their humane and heroic conduct on the occasion of the loss of the Forfarshire Steamer on the Fern Islands.”—*OBSERVER, Dec. 16, 1838.*

“ Grace Darling and her venerable father, waited, by desire, at Alnwick Castle, on Wednesday-week, upon their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, who gave them a very kind and courteous reception.

Her Grace made the heroine a present of a beautiful shawl, and his Grace placed in her hands a liberal present for her mother, Mrs. Darling. The noble Duke afterwards presented the father and daughter with two splendid gold medallions from the Royal Humane Society. The medals are of the value of about Twenty Pounds each. Mr. Darling is a very fine military-looking old man, and his countenance indicates a high degree of warm-heartedness and energy of character. Grace does not belie her name ; for she is indeed a sweet girl, modest and unassuming, and appearing to be unconscious of having done anything great or noble."

—OBSERVER, Dec. 16, 1838.

"A private subscription has been suggested to purchase Mr. Darling and his daughter some honorary reward ; but there are national associations for this purpose ; and it is expected that some influential person will put forward their claim on these public institutions."—GLOBE, September, 18, 1838.

The ensuing tale is a popular Sketch of Men about Town, Things as They Are, and the various phases of London Modern Life : the main and eventual interest of the story turns upon the Wreck of the Forfarshire Steam-vessel and the heroic conduct of Grace Darling. The narrative of Somerville and Eliza is founded, in reference to its main incident, upon the "Confession" of Jereboam O. Beauchamp, who was executed at Frankfort, Ky, (in the United States) on the 7th of July, 1826, for the murder of Colonel Solomon P. Sharp, Attorney General of Ky. Colonel Sharp had seduced, under aggravated circumstances of villainy, Miss Ann Cook, whom Beauchamp subsequently married, and whose wrongs he avenged upon the head of the seducer. Mrs. Beauchamp voluntarily put an end to her own existence, on the day of the execution of her husband and was buried with him in the same grave. The "Confession" was published, together with some poetical pieces written by Mrs. Beauchamp, by a bookseller of Ky. I know and fully appreciate the truth of the maxim that *Le plus vrai n'est pas toujours le plus vraisemblable* ; but in the fact of an individual constituting himself the champion of the woman he loves, even though her wrongs were inflicted previous to their marriage or even acquaintance, appears to me to be nothing that is not consonant with probability.

The work was originally written to be published as a novel in two volumes : the reader will therefore remark that in its present cheaper and more popular shape it contains as much letter-press as two octavo volumes of the usual novel-form.

G. W. M. REYNOLDS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The Reader is at once introduced to a Character that will occupy a conspicuous Part in the pages of this work; and the Character himself is also introduced to something remarkable. 1

CHAPTER II.

In which the Reader is hastily presented with a few rough sketches of a well-known tenement for decayed gentlemen and insolvent adventurers. 6

CHAPTER III.

Messrs. Luffey and Moffat are introduced to the Reader and to Mr. Slapman Twill.—Some select anecdotes related in a prison. 11

CHAPTER IV.

In which the Reader is made more intimately acquainted with the previous history of Mr. and Mrs. Somerville, to whom he has already been abruptly introduced. 21

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Twill is regaled with several interesting anecdotes which tend to illustrate the nature of those pursuits that occupy many great men in this metropolis.—A singular scene at which Mr. Twill is present. 25

CHAPTER VI.

A true and graphic sketch of a place belonging to the Sovereigns of this Realm and to decayed gentlemen in general. 31

CHAPTER VII.

The manner in which Mr. Skeffington concocts and gives a supper upon a very splendid scale to a very splendid society, and the adventures attending the same, are related in this chapter. 37

CHAPTER VIII.

In which the Reader is made acquainted with a variety of adventures that happened to Somerville in the pursuit of the vengeance he thirsted for. 42

CHAPTER IX.

In which the Reader is made acquainted with the continuation of the adventures of Mr. Slapman Twill. 48

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Slapman Twill discovers that literary pursuits are anything but neglected within the walls of the King's Bench.—He meets with the proprietor of a new Journal. 54

CHAPTER XI.

Grace Darling and her father are here more fully introduced to the Reader.—The stranger.—The adventure of the ring.—Emotions of Somerville and his wife.—The Sea-God's Son. 60

CHAPTER XII.

A hitherto omitted episode in the tale of Eliza's wrongs, now comes to light.—The ring.—A mysterious attack. 66

CHAPTER XIII.

In which Mr. Twill is made acquainted with the History of a gentleman whose ruin was caused by the extent of a fertile imagination. 73

CHAPTER XIV.

Somerville obtains a slight insight into the customs and habits of the Doctor's residence.—He sees much to astonish and excite him. 68

CHAPTER XV.

The Red-Cross of Albion.—Mr. Darling relates an adventure of his early years.—unexpected visit brought about by the poisoned ring. 94

CHAPTER XVI.

Somerville receives a little farther initiation into the intentions and ways of Doctor Wokensmithers.—He becomes acquainted with a gentleman who draws his horoscope.—The ward of incurables.—The Journal of an Englishman. 102

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Twill is induced to preside at a racket match.—an interesting dispute between a great Physician and a small Man.—The King's-bench.—Mr. John Plummers is again introduced to the Reader.—Mrs. Wokensmithers. 110

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Eagle Coach.—A Traveller's tale. 118

CHAPTER XIX.

A chapter in which it is hoped the Reader will find much to interest and please him. 125

CHAPTER XX.

The misery of not being able to pay one's debts is exemplified in the commencement of this chapter.—Somerville returns home.—The departure for France. 133

CHAPTER XXI.

A brief sketch of an eminent race of modern gentlemen.—The duel, and its results. 138

CHAPTER XXII.

In which the narrative takes a leap over several years.—The Forfarshire steamship.—Grace Darling again. 142

CHAPTER XXIII.

In which this tale is brought to a conclusion. 155

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Plate I.—Darling and his Daughter rowing to the Wreck	Vignette Title
II.—A Scene in the cabin of the Forfarshire Steam-vessel	Frontispiece
III.—Mr. Mosee arresting Mr. Twill.	3
IV.—Lord Bilkemorl and Mr. Twill in the Bench.	9
V.—Eliza and the Stranger	22
VI.—The King's Bench Prison.	31
VII.—The Supper Scene	39
VIII.—Grace Darling's attention to Young Somerville	47
IX.—Mr. Twill's Interview with Mr. Plummers	49
X.—Mr. Darling Exhibits the Ring	64
XI.—Unwelcome Visitors	72
XII.—Mr. Tuffell meeting with Mr. Plummers and Miss Jennings.	79
XIII.—The Reading of the Will	84
XIV.—The Cutter and the Brig	96
XV.—Fifine	100
XVI.—Dr. Twoynonton in a Dilemma	113
XVII.—Mrs. Wokensmithers	117
XVIII.—A Traveller's Tale	121
XIX.—Somerville's return from the Solicitor's	134
XX.—Somerville's Meeting with Stanley	141

GRACE DARLING;

OR,

THE HEROINE OF THE FERN ISLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

THE READER IS AT ONCE INTRODUCED TO A CHARACTER THAT WILL OCCUPY A CONSPICUOUS PART IN THE PAGES OF THIS WORK; AND THE CHARACTER HIMSELF IS ALSO INTRODUCED TO SOMETHING REMARKABLE.

THERE is an aristocratic air about the coffee-room of Long's Hotel which is in perfect keeping with the character of the caravansary. Five years ago the arrangements of the above-mentioned coffee-room were as follows. The paper was a species of dingy crimson with yellowish flowers; and the carpet had been chosen to match the hue of the walls. The room is an oblong, with fire-places, facing each other, on the smaller sides of the parallelogram. A handsome mirror surmounts each mantel; and on one of these mantels is invariably strewed, with the most admirable disregard of any thing approximating order, a heap of letters which seem as if they had lain at least six months in the depths of the twopenny postman's pocket before they had been delivered. Some of these letters are addressed to gentlemen who have either gone or run away; and the remainder belong to residents in the hotel, but are not opened because their superscription is in the hand-writing of a tradesman in an adjacent street, or because their thickness seems to indicate that their inclosures are long accounts for goods delivered. Four or five tables grace the window-side of the room, and three the other; there is also a side-board with cold meats upon it, and a species of inclosure or box near the door with a head-waiter in it.

It was about seven o'clock in the evening, (in the year 1833,) and a variety of little dinners were under discussion at the different tables. But at one especial table there was seated a very specially original gentleman. His age might have been about thirty: his dress was in the very extreme of fashion. He wore rings from Storr and Mortimer's on

his fingers, boots from Hoby on his feet, a coat from Nugee on his back, pantaloons from Anderson's on his legs, and a drawl from a drawing-room on his tongue. His person enjoyed the blessing of linen of the whitest hue ; and he himself was enjoying a little series of turtle, iced punch, and hashed venison with a relish which betrayed the necessity of eating under which the most aristocratic gentlemen of the day unexceptionably labour.

In fact, the gentleman, to whom we have just introduced our readers, was the very pink of every thing fashionable and well-bred. No man was more skilful in fighting his way out of a scrape and into a station-house : none could better bully a police-officer and cringe to a magistrate. He frequented every abode of amusement and diversion about town : at one moment he was at a Hell in the Quadrant—at another he was discussing oysters and Moet's champagne at the Elysium in Brydges-street. All regions, whether celestial or infernal, were alike to him.

The Honourable Mr. Slapman Twill—for such was the name of the distinguished personage now described—had terminated his dinner and commenced his claret and the newspaper, when the head-waiter accosted him with the most determined coffee-room shuffle and the most mysterious air in the world.

"Nothing wrong, I hope, Sir?" said the waiter in an amiable whisper.

"Where?" demanded the Honourable Mr. Slapman Twill, laying down his dessert-knife and the *Globe* in the deepest indignation at this interruption.

"There," returned the head-waiter, jerking his head towards the door. "A very queer-looking-fellow wants to see you, Sir."

"Tell him I'm out," said Mr. Twill.

"I did : but he won't have it at any price," persisted the waiter.

"Then let him go and be ——," began Mr. Twill.

"He won't do that either," added the waiter.

"I don't think it could be a dun," ruminated Mr. Slapman Twill. "I hardly fancy he'd venture here since I thrashed the hosier's boy the other day and had to pay damages. But really these fellows are so exceedingly insolent!"

And having come to this very proper conclusion, Mr. Twill speedily arrived at another—viz., that he had better see the intrusive stranger. He accordingly stept up towards the coffee-room door, where he was accosted by an individual whose very appearance gave him so sudden a turn that he almost ran back again to his seat at the other end.

The stranger was a short person, stooping rather in his gait, and owning the undisputed freehold of the most repulsive countenance in the world. He was somewhat below the middle height ; and his years might be sixty. His dress, as were his manners, was peculiar. He wore black trousers and waistcoat, and a light green surtout coat which had been suspended to a nail for two years at least in Holywell street before it embellished the back of its present wearer. His shirt was a fortnight old, and his stockings bespoke a coeval date. His hands were as naked as is the truth of this description ; and his strongly marked profile at once betrayed his consanguinity with that highly respectable fraternity—the Jews. The expression of his countenance cannot be termed flattering to any great extent ; inasmuch as it seemed to indicate that hypocrisy and

4



Mr. Moses, the Sheriff's Officer of
Hannibal, Oxford Street, meeting Mr. Chapman, built
in the coffee room of Long's Hotel.

villany were amongst the most venial of this gentleman's vices, as indeed they were. A thick pair of shoes and a mat of unkempt grizzled hair completed the portrait of this unwelcome guest.

"Don't ye know me?" enquired the stranger, edging himself up to Mr. Twill, and walking a little way into the coffee-room with the utmost ease of manner. "My name ain't quite veared out yet."

"No—who the devil are you?" demanded Mr. Twill.

"My name's Moses, and I've a writ agin you," was the immediate reply. "My chap's a-vaitin' outside: I likes to do the thing as is genteel."

"Upon my word, I thank you for your politeness, Mr. Moses," said Mr. Slapman Twill, ironically. "But perhaps you'd just allow me to finish my wine and my paper. I can't think of leaving before I've read Lord Mizzlekitty's speech on the opening of the new toll-gate at Clapham."

"Plenty o' vine up at my place—Newman-street, Oxford-street," said Mr. Moses; "an' a very nice secluded little room to drink it in, too. Shall my chap call a hackney?"

Mr. Twill perceived that there would be but little use in attempting to gain a moment's delay. He therefore ascertained the name of the creditor at whose suit he was arrested, and the amount of the sum; and having hastily "packed up a few traps," as he elegantly expressed himself in the most polished of fashionable phraseology, he jumped into a coach which Mr. Moses' follower had already provided, and in a short space of time was safely landed at the lockup-house in Newman-street.

On his arrival at this respectable mansion, he was introduced into a little room on the right-hand side of a narrow passage, until Mrs. Moses could prepare a chamber for his reception; and as soon as a troublesome tenant of the back drawing-room, who had not paid for his breakfast, could be ejected in order to be despatched to Whitecross-street prison, Mr. Slapman Twill was introduced into the apartment thus vacated.

"Will you pay for the room afore-hand, please, Sir?" demanded Mrs. Moses, when she had taken a chair from its place and put it back again, in order to have the appearance of attending to the comforts of her prisoner.

"Certainly," said Mr. Twill. "How much do you want?"

"A guinea for the room, and then there'll be supper," muttered Mrs. Moses. "Thirty shillings," she added aloud.

"There they are," said Mr. Twill. "Now let me have a bottle of sherry and some cigars."

"Another half sufferin', then, please, Sir," said Mrs. Moses.

"Why—you've already got ten shillings more than you require," objected Mr. Twill.

"Them's for hextras," laconically observed Mrs. Moses.

The surplus demand was accordingly complied with; and during the time that intervened before the supplies arrived, Mr. Slapman Twill amused himself by pacing up and down the room to which his scope was so uncomfortably confined.

The apartment commanded through its solitary window a cheerful and pleasing prospect of an infinite series of iron gratings, which were placed above a court below in order to prevent any one who might be walking

there from climbing over the walls. The view beyond these walls was confined to dingy-looking houses and picturesque stacks of chimneys. The interior of the chamber was anything but exhilarating in its aspect. Large pictures of naval actions, in which gigantic French ships were striking their colours to puny English vessels, graced, or rather disgraced the walls : the tall mantel-piece was covered with glass ornaments and shells ; there was a side-board beneath the portraits of a Jew and a Jewess attired in deep black ; and a large kitchen clock stood near the window. A side door admitted Mr. Twill into a small dressing-room ; and a species of portable cupboard in the corner of his sitting apartment gave vent to a bed as soon as it was opened. All these arrangements, together with the iron bars at the windows, were exceedingly gratifying to a gentleman who had just been uncharitably snatched from the more delightful sojourn of Long's Hotel.

Mrs. Moses shortly made her appearance with the sherry and cigars, whereupon Mr. Slapman Twill's scrutiny of his chamber ceased ; and he turned to the more pleasing investigation of the soothing articles he had ordered. Suddenly a violent noise, as if there were a rush of people in the office below, caused him to start and listen. In a few minutes Mrs. Moses returned hastily to his room, crying at the top of a very shrill voice, "Oh ! Sir—vot d'ye think. Blest if there b ain't the 'torious Captain Smashall just brought in !"

"And who is the notorious Captain Smashall ?" demanded Mr. Twill.

"Vot, Sir," continued Mrs. Moses, "ain't you heerd speak of the celebrated smuggler, Captain Smashall, as escaped out of a hundred and twenty prisons, to say nothink o' lockup-houses, and has shot eighty 'cise-meh with his own hand ?"

Mr. Slapman Twill intimated that he had never heard of such a character.

"The most 'torious vot is," exclaimed Mrs. Moses.

"Is he arrested for debt too ?" enquired Mr. Twill.

"I should rather think so," returned Mrs. Moses. "The officers had a nation deal o' trouble to captivate him. But I've quite forgotten the cause of my troublin' you again. The fact is, the 'ouse is so full, and the captain swears so awful that he von't go to the coffee-room, that I should feel very much obleeged if you'd let me make up a bed here for the captain to-night. He's a wery agreeable man, and knows how to conduct his-self like a gentleman."

Mr. Twill was delighted at the opportunity of having a companion, and immediately assented to the arrangement.

In a few minutes Captain Smashall entered the room. He was a man of at least fifty-five years of age ; his hair was white, but his large whiskers were black as jet, being evidently dyed. His small and deeply-set grey eyes sparkled with vivacity, and denoted the utmost resolution and firmness. His complexion was rather sunburnt ; still a healthy red appeared upon his cheeks ; his nose was aquiline—his mouth small—and when opened, it displayed two rows of strong and good teeth. He stooped slightly in his gait ; but his limbs evinced great muscular powers. His clothes were blue, and his coat was adorned with brass buttons. A thick cane in his hand completed the portrait.

The moment he was ushered into the apartment, he made a slight bow

to Mr. Twill, walked up to the window, the casement of which he opened, and proceeded to examine the bars. This scrutiny was only the work of an instant, in which little space his experienced eye had discovered the strength of the grating. Having closed the window, he seated himself opposite to Mr. Slapman Twill.

"You may think I am intrusive, Sir," said he, commencing an apology which was speedily put an end to by Mr. Slapman Twill, who declared that the apartment was perfectly at his service. "This is the only lockup-house," continued Smashall, after a slight pause, "that I have never been in before to-day; and it is also the only one out of which I have not hitherto escaped," he added with a smile of contempt, as if in derision of the grated window that looked upon the court.

"I heard that you had broken out of a hundred and odd prisons," observed Mr. Twill. "Is it true?"

"No—ridiculous in the extreme," replied the captain. "Six prisons, however, besides such places as this, have not been capable of retaining me. Once I was left for death in Newgate; but the law was disappointed. From the Fleet was my grand escape:—that was a noble exploit."

"Indeed," said Mr. Twill. "I should very much like to hear an account of your adventure. But perhaps you will allow me to offer you a glass of wine and a cigar?"

Captain Smashall, having been accommodated with a clean glass and a Silva, continued his anecdote as follows:—

"You must know," said Captain Smashall, "that I was a prisoner for debt in that same Fleet; and I was in imminent danger of more serious prosecutions against me. Had I tarried, perhaps I should not have lived to tell the tale in Mr. Moses' lockup-house, but should have been very carefully hanged. The extremity of the Fleet Prison next to Farringdon-street, is but a few feet from the wall; and you may remember that the wall itself is surmounted by strong *chevaux-de-frise*. Being aware of these particulars, I provided myself with a couple of long cords and a hook, watched my opportunity, and determined to feign intoxication and behave in the most turbulent manner possible."

"And why should you do that?" demanded Mr. Twill.

"You shall hear. Having thus resolved," proceeded the captain, "I roved from one room to another, where I had acquaintances, and drank a great quantity of liquor; but I pretended to have swallowed more than I really had; indeed, at that time I could drink deeper than the generality of men. Towards night, all believed me to be immoderately tipsy; in reality, I was nearly as sober as I am at present. My aim was to create a disturbance, and I succeeded. Dishes, plates, and other utensils I scattered in all directions, and quarrelled with every one I met, fighting, and swearing most horribly, at the same time. At length, to my great joy, I was taken to the strong room. That, which those around deemed a punishment, I had so zealously sought for. The strong room was at the extremity of the Fleet Prison I have just now described, and was situated on the very uppermost story overlooking Farringdon-street. At midnight I commenced my work. A hole was soon made through the roof, and I stood in the open air, on the top of the building. One end of a cord was soon fastened round the chimney; the other, to which the hook was affixed, I threw towards the wall. My exertions succeeded.

the hook caught the bar or axle upon which the *chevaux-de-frise* turned, and was secure. Without a moment's delay I slid down the rope and defied the iron spikes that opposed me. The second cord was speedily attached to the bar ; and in another minute I was in the street."

This is a sample of the anecdotes with which Captain Smashall wiled away the time till Mrs. Moses and the extra mattresses made their appearance. The bed was then emancipated from its cupboard ; and another couch was manufactured upon the sofa. These arrangements having been completed, the captain resumed his extraordinary tales, which he and Mr. Twill discussed simultaneously with their wine and cigars. It was true that Smashall had defied the jaws of prisons, that he laughed at locks and bars—that he had even succeeded in life ; and that he was at the period of which we speak, a Post-Captain in the Navy. He had invented one of the most surprising specimens of art that the present century has probably witnessed—a submarine boat, through the aid of which he had even purported and negotiated for the release of the Emperor Napoleon from the island of St. Helena. In this work he had exemplified talents that would do credit to the most expert engineer ; still obstacles were thrown in his way by a jealous government, which to the utmost of its ability endeavoured to crush the individual who thus laboured to benefit the scientific world. For daring enterprize, Baron Trenck himself had not surpassed him of whom we are speaking ; and if the great Northern novelist, now no more, did him some wrong, ignorance of the real facts may partially plead in extenuation.

At length all the topics of conversation together with the sherry and cigars being exhausted, the two gentlemen retired each to his respective couch. In due process of time the morning dawned : a gentle breeze blew upon Mr. Twill's cheek and awoke him. The curtains of the window were agitated by the wind ; and yet he remembered that the casements were closed on the preceding evening. He hastily sprung out of bed and saw that the couch of his companion was empty. Glancing his eye around, Mr. Slapman Twill perceived one of the iron bars lying in the middle of the apartment. The truth was soon ascertained : a blanket was hanging from the open window :—the Captain had effected his escape in the night !

But it were useless to dwell upon the astonishment of Mr. Twill, or the rage of Mr. Moses and his very exemplary wife. Mr. Twill sent for his solicitor—a *habeas-corpus* was procured—and in the course of the morning Mr. Waters, the tipstaff, conducted him to the King's Bench.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE READER IS HASTILY PRESENTED WITH A FEW ROUGH SKETCHES OF A WELL-KNOWN TENEMENT FOR DECAYED GENTLEMEN AND INSOLVENT ADVENTURERS.

MR. Slapman Twill, having paid his gate-fees and the other little *et ceteras* which were demanded of him, was conducted to the coffee-house by one of the criers who was summoned to perform that office.

The outward man of this crier is worthy of description. He was an

individual of about fifty-five years of age, with a florid and most good-humoured countenance. His attire consisted of a fustian shooting jacket and trousers of the same : he wore a blue checked shirt and a white cravat, which latter was tied with the most pleasing negligence ; and a pair of circular-toed shoes graced his feet. Waistcoats he had for a long time eschewed ; but as, by way of contra-distinction to the prevailing habit in the King's Bench, he was the acknowledged proprietor of an occasional clean shirt, the absence of the other article of apparel did not materially affect his reputation. In his gait he somewhat resembled a duck, being addicted to a certain waddle which essentially added to the comicality of his appearance. His character was that of a generous, money-making, eccentric man, whom long imprisonment had moulded into something not met with elsewhere.

The family of the Wusteds is well known in the regions of St. George's Fields. Mr. Harry Wusted is one of the turnkeys at the King's Bench—Mr. George Wusted farms the kitchen in the King's Bench—Mr. John Wusted does the same by the Coffee-House—and Mr. —— Wusted is a police-man in the vicinity. It was therefore by Mr. Henry Wusted, who accompanied Mr. Fork, the crier above alluded to, that Mr. Slapman Twill was introduced to Mr. John Wusted of the Coffee-House.

"Can I be accommodated with a bed here for to-night ?" demanded Mr. Twill of Mr. John Wusted who was seated on a very little bench in a very little bar next to a very little coffee-room.

"Yes—on that there table," replied Mr. Wusted, pointing to the deal article alluded to in a cellar-looking place which formed the entrance to the coffee-house.

"Oh ! the gen'leman ain't particular," observed Mr. Henry Wusted ; and to demonstrate his conviction that such was the fact, he ordered a bottle of stout at Mr. Twill's expense.

"Nice place, this," remarked Mr. John Wusted, as he tossed off the contents of his glass.

"Excellent," coincided Mr. Henry Wusted, in a tone so mysterious that Mr. Twill could not understand whether the two gentlemen alluded to the little bar or the Bench in general, in their ill-defined encomiums.

"Slap-up chaps has slept on that there table afore now," continued Mr. Henry Wusted.

"I should think so," ejaculated his brother John : and this brief dialogue having concluded with the bottle of stout, Mr. Twill was shown into the coffee-room itself, where he was left to the mercy of his own thoughts, a couple of small pictures on the mantel-piece, and the various ordinances of the judges of the Court of King's Bench.

As Mr. Slapman Twill left the presence of Mr. John Wusted, Lord Bilkemorl, who had been for some time a prisoner in the Bench, entered it.

"Any new prisoners, eh, Wusted ?" demanded his lordship, leaning his arms with the most amiable condescension over the low door which protected the bar.

"Yes—a rare one, as I've heerd say," returned Mr Wusted. "Plenty of tin, I understand."

"So much the better," observed Lord Bilkemorl : "I suppose he'll bite, eh, Wusted ?"

Mr. Wusted jerked his left thumb over his shoulder, grinned significantly, but said nothing.

" Give me a cigar and a glass of port-wine negus," said his lordship in a drawling tone of voice.

At this moment Mrs. Wusted, who was a tall, spare, lanky woman, entered the bar, his lordship stepping back for a moment to allow her the means of ingress.

" Now then—do you hear what his lordship says ?" demanded Mr. Wusted of his affectionate spouse.

" Yes—I hear," observed Mrs. Wusted : " but hearin' and givin' is two very different things. Indeed, I'm sorry to say, my lord, that you owes George at the kitchen two weekly bills as you don't seem inclined to pay ; and old Nanny says she can't get a mag out of you. City Larder is blowing up right and left ; and Crocky has per-rogued all furder tick. So I thinks its pretty near time for us to do the same thing. Ve raly can't chalk up no more to your account."

At this moment, old Fork, the crier's voice intruded upon the conversation ; and the following notice was issued to the worthy inhabitants of the Bench :—

" O yes ! O yes ! O yes ! Lost, behind the State-house, a silk pocket-ankercher. Whoever will bring it to the crier shall receive a pot of half-and-half reward, and no questions asked."

This announcement was immediately followed by another, delivered through the medium of the same organ, and to the following effect :—

" O yes ! O yes ! O yes ! Notice is hereby given, a Free-and-Easy will be held at the *Brace* this evening, for the benefit of Mr. Snuggs, Mr. Sillyman in the cheer. Music and other vocal harmony. It is particlery rekvested that all the gen'lemen of this college 'ull not fail to attend. God save the King."

These announcements having terminated, Lord Bilkemor reiterated his demand for the negus and cigar ; but finding that those articles were not forthcoming, because the money was equally tardy in its movements, he resolved upon forming an immediate acquaintance with the new-comer. His lordship accordingly proceeded to the coffee-room, where Mr. Slapman Twill was perusing the list of insolvents who were destined to figure at the court in Portugal-street on the following morning.

" Just arrived, I presume ?" observed Lord Bilkemor to Mr. Twill, thrusting his hands into the empty pockets of a capacious pea-coat at the same time.

Mr. Twill intimated an affirmative.

" Suspicion or contempt ?" inquired his lordship.

Mr. Twill was sufficiently acquainted with his interrogator's meaning to explain that he was a prisoner upon suspicion of debt and not for contempt of court.

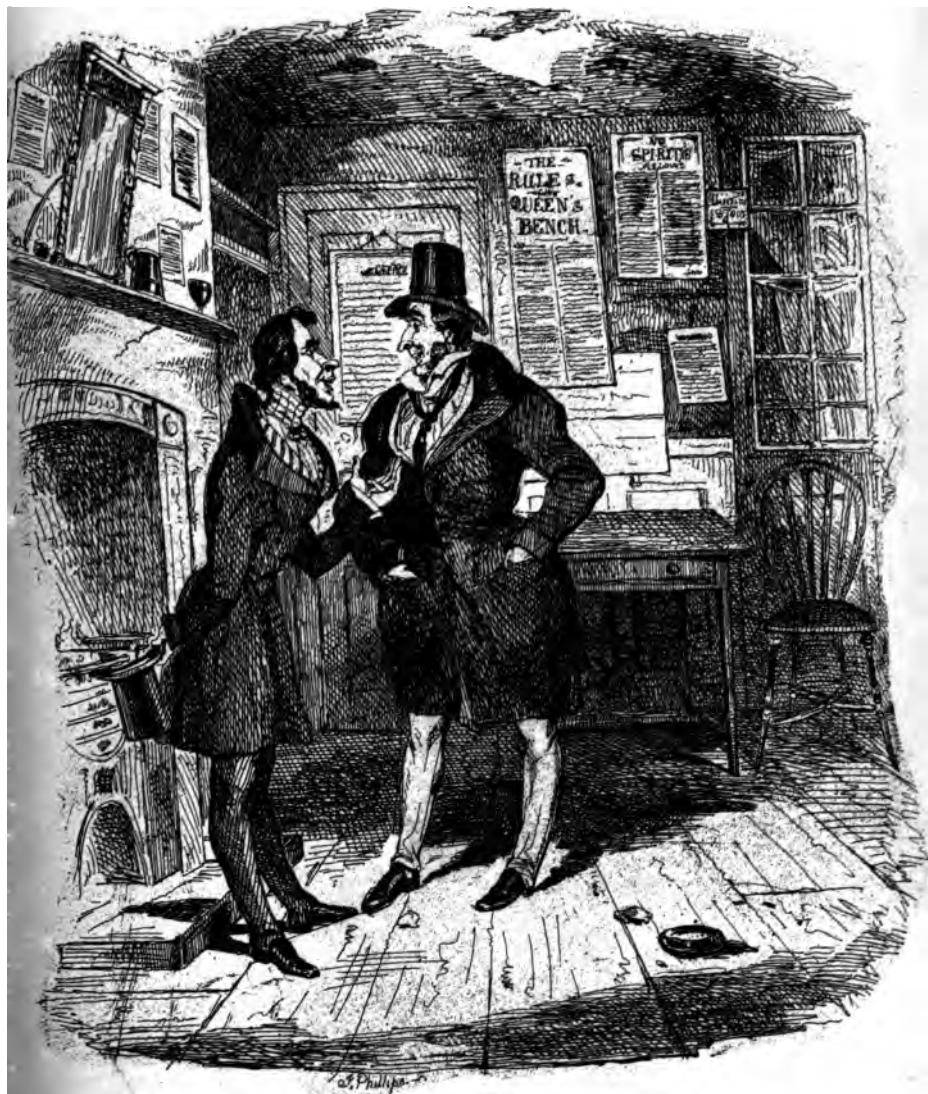
" Much ?" demanded his lordship.

The amount was specified, and Lord Bilkemor observed that it was a mere trifle, adding, much to his own honour and that of the aristocracy in general, that his debts amounted to a cool hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

" Thank God, that's no joke," added his lordship.

" And do the creditors exemplify an equal amount of gratitude to heaven on account of their losses ?" enquired Mr. Twill.





Sir Pitt-Rivers and Mr. Twill
in the
Puffin Room of the King's Bench Tavern

"I should think not," answered the nobleman. "But do you intend to be whitewashed? I'm going through, you know."

"I shall not have recourse to the Insolvents' court," replied Mr. Twill; but he had to the bell, and when the small boy, who officiated as waiter, made his appearance in a dirty apron and a violent hurry, Mr. Twill ordered a glass of soda-water and sherry to refresh himself withal.

"William—eh—William," cried his lordship, as the waiter was about to disappear; "I'll also do a system of soda and sherry."

Mr. Wusted was consulted by the waiter, and Mrs. Wusted by her husband—and the result of the conference was, an agreement that his lordship should be accommodated with the beverage he required, inasmuch as there seemed every probability of its being paid for by the new-comer. So the nobleman's wants were supplied simultaneously with those of Mr. Slapman Twill, and this little achievement put the two gentlemen upon a very comfortable and amiable footing together.

"I should ask you to dinner with me to-day," said his lordship, after a short pause, "only —"

The truth would have been—"only I have none;" but the untruth and the excuse were, "only my room is being papered." This latter operation it had undergone a long time ago, and never been paid for—facts which his lordship deemed unworthy of mention.

"Pray make no apologies," said Mr. Twill, "On the contrary—do me the favour to take your veal-cutlet with me. My name is Twill—the Honourable Mr. Slapman Twill."

"And mine is Lord Bilkemorl," returned the nobleman, "at your service—especially to-day at five o'clock. You'd better order the champagne beforehand, because they haven't got any very good—if they have at all—in this place. Ice you may have for a trifle—but that we can dispense with. The claret you may entrust Wusted to procure you."

Mr. Twill expressed his gratitude to Lord Bilkemorl for this information, and promised to profit by it. His lordship, who was engaged to a morning party for the purpose of discussing hot gin and water, cigars, and the characters of his fellow-prisoners, then took leave of Mr. Twill for the time being; and when he had worked himself up to a highly affecting pitch of intoxication at the aforesaid morning party, his lordship refreshed himself with a walk upon the parade-ground in the society of his friend Mr. Fiddler's wife, of whom he was passionately fond.

Scarcely had his lordship left the room, when Mr. Wusted, the coffee-house keeper, entered it.

"I've jist bin a-thinkin' as I can accommodate you with a room to yourself, Sir," said Mr. Wusted, "if so be you're inclined to stay with us a short time or so."

"Nothing would please me better," ejaculated Mr. Twill, alluding to the room and not to the lengthened sojourn.

"'Tis jist over head," said Mr. Wusted. "A precious seedy couple has it now. They've bin here this three weeks, come Monday, and blowed if I've ever seen more than five pounds o' their money; and that the young 'oman raised upon her cloak."

"They are very poor, then?" exclaimed Mr. Twill.

"Poor as wengeance," was the answer. "But come along, and you'll see the crib."

Thus talking Mr. Wusted conducted Mr. Twill to the chamber precisely above the coffee-room. Its tenants were a young man and his wife, who were sitting, as Mr. Twill entered, in a most dejected state near one of the miserable low windows which commanded a cheerful and exhilarating prospect of the pump below. The male tenant of the apartment was a handsome youth of about two-and-twenty, with dark black eyes, a somewhat florid complexion, brown curling hair, and an expression of countenance which could not but excite the compassion of any save the callous adjuncts of prisons. His female companion was one of the most lovely of God's creatures. Never did mortal eye glance upon so fair a thing as the girl who sate with the unhappy prisoner. Long, luxuriant curls of auburn dye, glittering like hyperions or the early dew of morning, hung over her ivory shoulders which a low gown partially exposed, allowing transient glimpses of the whitest and most voluptuous bosom in the world. Her eyes were large and of a dark blue colour, rolling beneath jetty lashes in a sea of the purest crystal. Her complexion was healthy and clear—her nose exactly straight—her mouth small to a fault—and the vermillion lips, when opened, disclosed a set of the whitest teeth. Her figure was small and delicate, and as exquisitely proportioned as the critical eye of the most experienced sculptor could desire. In fine, she seemed, in that gloomy prison, to be a lily in the midst of a terrific wilderness, with only one congenial flower to bear her company.

"This is your bill, Mr. Somerville," said Mr. Wusted, presenting a suspicious-looking slip of paper with one hand; "and this is the new lodger," he added, indicating Mr. Slapman Twill with the other.

The young lady cast a look of the most thorough and heart-rending despair at her companion.

"And is there no room for us yet in the prisor—not even on the poor side?" enquired she in a scarcely audible voice.

"No—but plenty elsewhere, if you've got the money to pay for it," was the reply. "So if you'd jist do me the favour to settle this little account, and then make your names Walker, I should feel very much obleeged," added Mr. Wusted.

"Oh! my dear—dear wife!" cried Somerville, clasping her whom he adored in his arms even in the presence of strangers: "it is come to this at last—and to-night we shall be without a lodging to protect you, dear girl, from the cold dews of heaven!"

"Courage, courage, dear Frederick," said this most magnanimous as well as lovely creature. "I have yet a gown to sell!"

But as she uttered these words, in a tone so melancholy that the heart of the greatest cynic who heard it must have been pierced to its core at the woe of that fair young person, the agony of her heart was depicted by the involuntary workings of her countenance.

"Come, then—Eliza—come," exclaimed the young man. "We cannot expect this person," he continued, pointing to Mr. Wusted, "to keep us for nothing; and as we are now beggars"—this was said with a bitter smile and a gnash of the teeth that made his wife shudder—"we must perish in the gaol—to-night—in the open air! Thank God—one consolation at least is left us—they cannot prevent us from dying together!"

And when Somerville had given vent to these expressions of his varic

and indescribable emotions, he laughed loud and long : but the laugh was not the joyous ebullition of merriment—it was the false note extracted from the failing chord of an almost broken heart.

"Well, and wot about this bill?" demanded Mr. Wusted with the most indelicate haste.

"I cannot pay it," said Somerville, after a pause.

"O God!" cried his wife, clasping her hands together in the bitterest agony.

"And them shirts!" continued Mr. Wusted, pointing to some linen which the affectionate wife had herself sate up during the greater portion of the previous night to wash, unknown to the inhabitants of the coffee-house, "they'll pay someat towards the little memmyrandy."

"Enough of this," exclaimed Mr. Slapman Twill, who had not been an unmoved nor disinterested spectator of all that had passed ; "Mr. Wusted, I shall not deprive this gentleman and his wife of their room."

"Eh?" said the coffee-house keeper, starting back in dismay, and afraid that Mr. Twill was about to decline taking his apartment.

"What is the amount they owe you?" demanded Mr. Twill ; and having cast his eyes over the bill which Mr. Wusted tendered him, he continued, "consider me answerable for this, I will pay it presently. And also consider this room hired by me. Mr. Somerville—excuse me—but the nature of the place in which we meet renders apology unnecessary. This room is your's; feel yourself independent in it—and order anything you choose from below. Good afternoon—I shall do myself the pleasure of calling upon you to-morrow."

Mr. Twill pushed Mr. Wusted out of the room, and made his own *exit* followed by a glance of friendship on the part of the young husband whom he had succoured, and by one of the most profound gratitude from the lovely and affectionate wife whom he had released from a predicament of the most thorough despair to a situation of comparative happiness and comfort.

CHAPTER III.

MESSRS. LUFFEY AND MOFFATT ARE INTRODUCED TO THE READER AND TO MR. SLAPMAN TWILL.—SOME SELECT ANECDOTES RELATED IN A PRISON.

PRECISELY as the clock of the coffee-room struck five, Lord Bilkemorl made his appearance at the little table which had been arranged for the dinner. His lordship had taken the liberty of introducing his most particular and intimate friends, Mr. Samuel Luffey and Mr. George Moffatt, to the same repast ; and when these gentlemen had been duly introduced to Mr. Slapman Twill, Mr. Slapman Twill amused himself for five minutes in scrutinizing the outward appearances of Mr. Samuel Luffey and Mr. George Moffatt.

Mr. Samuel Luffey was a tall, ill-proportioned young gentleman, with very long dirty brown hair flowing over the old velvet collar of a worn-out black surtout coat, and with that species of checked plaid trousers which

resembles the ticken of a modern mattress, save that the stripes are crossed. This gentleman had a particularly drawling voice and a most mendacular tongue; he walked on his toes rather than on his heels, and preferred taking a view of the pavement as he did walk to the more usual system of casting glances the rays of which are parallel to the earth. His linen was especially dirty, as indeed was his whole person; and his manners, as well as his character, were supposed to be connected with certain peculiarities which do not always find admirers.

Mr. George Moffatt was the intimate friend of Mr. Samuel Luffey. As far as moral characteristics went, they were pretty much alike; in physical relations they somewhat differed. Mr. Moffatt was cleanly in his person, whenever his means allowed himself and his washerwoman to disburse a few halfpence in the purchase of soap; and his clothes were generally of a better description than those possessed by Mr. Luffey. When he was a "young man about town," it is said that he always carried a cork-screw in one pocket, and a bill stamp in the other. These figures of speech doubtless implied a certain sponging propensity on the one hand, and a borrowing predilection on the other. But to draw a friend or a bottle are the only two acmes of ambition at which modern gentlemen aim; for what is the benefit of having friends, if you cannot make use of them? So thought Mr. George Moffatt—so thought Mr. Samuel Luffey—so thought Lord Bilkemorl—and perhaps, even so thought Mr. Slapman Twill.

"You see I make myself at home, Twill," observed his lordship. "My idea of things is this—use your friend as you would yourself."

"Certainly," cried Mr. George Moffatt, who always agreed with his lordship.

"So I say," drawled out Mr. Samuel Luffey.

"When once I like a man, all I have is at his disposal," continued his lordship: (he had not much to dispose of—his toothbrush and razors forming the principal portion of his moveable possessions). "I would not give a fig for a chap who didn't entertain the same opinion!"

"My purse is my friend's," echoed Mr. Moffatt, chasing a sixpenny piece into the corner of his pocket, and catching it just as he concluded his sentence as follows:—"and all I have, I will sacrifice to friendship."

"So will I," added Mr. Luffey, who had a letter waiting for him at the post-office, and had not sent for it because he had no loose, nor any other description of cash, to pay the postage.

Mr. Slapman Twill smiled at the various observations of his guests, but offered no remark. Presently the dinner made its appearance; and in the discussion of a little procession of fried soles, roast veal, a duck, and a tart, the three friends appeared for a moment to have forgotten their most disinterested opinions before expressed; inasmuch as Messrs. Luffey and Moffatt were nearly quarrelling relative to a wing of the aforesaid duck. Indeed, the matter might have ended in blows, had not his lordship wisely settled the dispute by appropriating the object of contention to his own especial use.

"Where were you last night, Moffatt?" enquired Lord Bilkemorl, when the cloth had been removed.

"Oh! I was at Foster's—and a precious lark we had of it," was the reply. "Plummers bet Ned Wallis that he couldn't hit Ben Trummel,

who'd fallen asleep in his chair, precisely on the right eye with an egg ; and when he did, Plummers wouldn't pay. So Foster called up Barney Angle, and then there was the very devil to pay. The watchmen were so drunk they wern't of any use ; and so we had the finest lark in the world. Such a precious shindy you never saw !"

It seems, however, that his lordship could imagine it ; for he laughed immoderately at his friend's anecdote, and in order to compose his feelings, was under the necessity of drinking four glasses of sherry one after the other as quickly as he could.

" Well, I and young Milleyboy," said Mr. Samuel Luffey, " were at the Tap, drinking half-and-half till they shut up. We then went and smoked cigars on the racket-ground till eleven o'clock ; after which we broke into MacHugh's room, dragged him out of bed, put him under the pump, and then smashed all his windows. I never had such a lark in my life," added Mr. Luffey, with amazing emphasis upon the pronoun.

" Well, I hadn't a bad night of it," observed Lord Bilkemorl, " for I was thundering drunk, to begin with. I went and played *écarté* with Mrs. Fiddler, while her husband drank gin-punch upon the sofa ; and then he very generously retired to a friend's room for the remainder of the evening. I shortly went up to my own room with Greening and parson Swiggle, and made them so d——d drunk that they fell asleep in their chairs. I then blacked their faces with burnt cork, ' and left them alone in their glory.' I understood this morning that Swiggle woke first ; and seeing his face reflected in the looking-glass opposite, he began pitching into Greening, under the impression that he had blacked his face. All I know is that they've both got the devil's own black eyes, and that they have not shown to-day on the racket ground."

" And what became of Doctor Twonynton ?" demanded Mr. Luffey, when he had worked himself into an ecstacy of merriment, and laughed himself out of it—and all occasioned by his lordship's recital.

" Oh ! Twonynton went and lost all his money at Pickyours," answered his lordship. " He had only eighteen pence in his pocket ——"

" When the devil ever had he more ?" facetiously demanded Mr. Moffatt.

" I should like to know *that*, too," added Mr. Luffey.

" Well—never mind," charitably interrupted his lordship : " he is a devilish good fellow, and that's all we care about. He always fills glass for glass, and will smoke his cigar like a Trojan. His only fault is, he gets crying-drunk."

Mr. Twill had by this time heard quite enough of the evening, or rather night adventures of the inmates of the King's Bench : he therefore proposed an adjournment to some place of recreation ; and, on the suggestion of Lord Bilkemorl, the party proceeded to Mr. Foster's room in the fourth stair-case, where they found several other prisoners seated at a table on which were spread a number of bottles, glasses, pipes, tobacco, and all the necessary materials for a carousal.

The nobleman, who acted as *chaperon* to the new-comer, appeared well acquainted with all the inmates of Mr. Foster's " tape-shop," as that gentleman's room was technically called ; and in a short time a general conversation began, in which Mr. Twill took but little part, he being contented with listening to the tales of the others.

According to their accounts, there was not one amongst them who had really merited incarceration in the Bench. The first had accepted a bill for a brother, who ran away without paying it ; another had been ruined by the perfidy of a friend ; a third had been robbed to an immense amount by servants ; a fourth had lost all by the failure of a bank ; a fifth did not owe one farthing of the debt for which he was arrested ; a sixth had offered the half on the spot and a bill for the other moiety at three months, with a guarantee—a proposition that had been refused ; a seventh had paid long ago, but had forgotten to take a receipt ; an eighth, a ninth, and a tenth had been ruined by rascally lawyers : in fine, they were all, if their own tales were to be believed, the most injured men in the world.

Mr. Twill was much too "wide awake" to credit everything that was said ; and in a few minutes the enormous specimens of Munchausenism which he heard gave him the most unqualified reasons for astonishment. There was, however, one remarkable feature in the society in which he found himself—and this was, that none present believed his neighbour, although a very decent semblance were made of relying upon everything that was said. Indeed, whenever an anecdote was concluded, the whole community declared, one "that it was d——d good," another "that it was a prime spree," a third "that it was a rummy go," and a fourth "that he'd never heard anything like it in his life." At length Mr. George Moffatt varied the conversation by relating the adventures attending his capture ; and this was the tale he told upon the occasion :—

"When I attained my majority, I had a tolerably good property," said Mr. Moffatt ; "and should have kept it, had not a rascally horse-jockey and my own most especially villainous uncle contrived to cheat me out of the best part of it. So that at last tradesmen began to dun ; and often, when I went into a shop, I was told that the very articles I required had all been sold—that new ones were expected ; or that the master was out, and that no credit could be given in his absence. By a strange fatuity, also, the whole of my tradesmen suddenly and simultaneously wanted 'to make up a sum,' and requested 'that I would favour them with the amount.' I therefore deemed it high time to be shy, and kept pretty much at home during the week ; but on Sunday I flashed my cab and my black horse in the park, making a splendid appearance for some time longer. One morning I saw the following advertisement in the *Times* :—'A gentleman, who conceals his name for particular reasons, which will be explained, requires a black horse' (here followed a long description), 'and would give a good price for it, as money is no object to him. Any letter, addressed (post paid) to X.Y.' (with the address) 'will meet with immediate attention,'—Now my horse exactly answered the description of the animal advertised for. I therefore replied to the advertisement, proposing that the advertiser should call upon me at my lodgings on a certain day, when I expected to make a good bargain, and put some ready money into my pocket—particularly as the animal had originally cost me nothing, it having been procured on credit. At the appointed time an individual, whose appearance I did not much like, was shown up into my apartments. After a few general remarks, he enquired if I were the gentleman who had replied to the advertisement relating to the horse ? I answered in the

affirmative, and informed him that my servant was ready to accompany him to the stable to inspect it, excusing myself from proceeding thither with him, under the plea of indisposition.—‘Oh!’ says the stranger, ‘it’s all nonsense about the horse : I see you kept cursed shy—and so I was obleeged to be on the halert to nab you, my pippin.’—‘Indeed,’ said I.—‘Oh ! yes,’ says he : ‘here’s a writ,’ taking one from his pocket, ‘and you must kin along with me to the lockup-house.’—‘Softly,’ said I, ‘my dear friend —’ for I soon recovered my presence of mind :—‘in whose name is it?’—‘Vilkins,’ says he.—‘Oh !’ said I, ‘very well,—it’s a just debt—I may as well pay it as not ; and I shall give you a guinea for yourself, as your trick tickles my fancy uncommonly.’—I called my servant, desired the officer to be seated, and ordered a bottle of wine. We sate down together before a cheerful fire, and soon became excellent friends. When the second decanter was emptied, he hinted that his time was precious, and that we had better settle the affair at once.—‘Very well,’ I said, rising and going to my writing desk, as if to produce the money—a motion which the officer did not fail to observe with anxiety. ‘How much is the debt?’ I demanded, suddenly pretending to recollect—or rather, to have forgotten myself.—‘Thirty-three pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence,’ he replied.—‘No, no,’ cried I ; ‘only thirty-two pounds, you mean : I remember it well—got the account in my desk.’—‘A pound or two, more or less, doesn’t matter to a gen’leman,’ said the officer : ‘here—look at the writs—both copy and horiginal—blowed if they tell lies ;’ and he held the papers before my eyes.—With the greatest coolness in the world, I snatched them from him and threw them into the fire : they were burnt to tinder before he recovered from the confusion into which the suddenness of the action had thrown him.—‘Now, Joe,’ said I to my servant, ‘kick this gentleman down stairs directly ; and mind, my dear fellow —’ addressing myself to the officer—the next time you want black horses, not to look to me for them.’—‘I’ll prig you yet,’ cried the bailiff, as he bounded down stairs. I now determined to be upon my guard, and only ventured out on Sunday, perfectly aware that the discomfited Sheriff’s officer would leave no stone unturned to entrap me. Some weeks passed away tranquilly, and I began to think but little of his schemes. One morning my servant offended me, and I turned him away in a moment of wrath : but I repented when my temper had had time to cool and when I had leisure for reflection. It was not long before I received a penitential letter from him, requesting my forgiveness, and begging to be admitted once more to my service. I replied that I was willing to look over his offence, and desired him to return as speedily as possible, giving him to understand that he was to make use of the mode of knocking at my door, which was adopted by my friends and those who knew of my perilous situation. In a couple of hours the well-known signal was given, I ran to the bottom of the stairs ; and to my horror, the Sheriff’s officer, whom I had before evaded, with a couple of his men, rushed upon me.—‘This time I have you,’ said he with a grin of triumph, while he read my arrest for a large amount. ‘I would advise you for the future,’ added he, ‘not to turn away faithful servants : they are certain to be avenged.’—And thereupon I was walked off to the lockup-house, whence I removed to the Bench.”

Mr. Moffatt having brought this most interesting tale to a conclusion, a gentleman, who rejoiced in the cognomen of Twallop, related the following anecdote for the behoof of those present:—

“ Some time ago I found myself in the most unenviable of positions, being entirely ruined and almost without friends. I had paid a week's rent for a three-pair front; and although I thus secured a seven day's bed to lie upon, I could not conveniently treat myself to a dinner. Add to this the consciousness that there were thousands of writs against me, and my predicament was none of the most pleasant. I was obliged to skulk about the metropolis at night, visiting gambling-houses, calling upon my former friends (you may imagine with what success) and living entirely upon my wits, in the most literal sense of the word. Once, being very hardly pressed for a dinner, I walked boldly into a hotel, at which I was well known during the days of my prosperity, and ordered a sumptuous repast. The waiters, judging by the audacity of my manner that I had doubtless come into an accession of fortune, hustled about, readily furnished a table, and acted so towards me that I again fancied myself to be a gentleman of property. I accordingly discussed as much wine as I cared for, and rose to depart. Of course, the bill was presented: of course I invented an excuse.—‘The devil—how could I have been so stupid? I had left my purse at home—but if the waiter would walk to my lodgings with me, I would immediately give him the amount due, and something handsome for himself.’—This was agreed to; and I led the wretched domestic a rare dance along as many streets as I could thread in a right line, so as not to appear to deviate purposely from the road to any fixed spot. He was however far from being fatigued: and I saw it was in vain to endeavour to weary him. Not choosing to let him know where my lodgings were really situated, I suddenly turned round, knocked him down, and gave him in charge for assault to the nearest policeman. Of course, as I was a gentleman, and he was but a waiter, his tale served him but little; and on the following morning he was compelled to pay five shillings for being drunk and disorderly in the streets, whereas the poor fellow was as sober as possible.”

Mr. Twallop paused a moment at this stage in his eventful career, and imbibed a tolerably strong glass of gin-and-water: he then told Mr. Foster “he might do *that* over again” (alluding to the manufacture of the liquor)—and as soon as his wishes were complied with, pursued his tale as follows:—

“ Seeing I had succeeded so well in this affair, I determined,” continued Mr. Twallop, “to try the same trick once more at another hotel. Having again fared splendidly, an excuse got me clear off; and I began to think a man might live in London for nothing. Day after day wore on; and at length I was most carefully ejected from my lodgings, with my trunk on my shoulder, because I could pay no more advances, and my ability to command funds at the expiration of a month was materially suspected by my landlord. I had but little in my trunk—and not a farthing in my pocket: thus neither was very difficult to carry. My heart was equally light; and so a moment's consideration told me how to act. I called a hackney-coach, put my trunk into it, and ordered the driver to take me to Sneed's Hotel. Arrived at the place of destination, I descended, strutted into the coffee-room, and ordered the head-waiter

to see that my trunk was lifted gently out, as there were some valuables in it. I also suggested that he might pay the hackney-coachman, as I had no change for a five. An entire week did I live at this excellent hotel without molestation ; and at the end of that time, on a fatal Monday morning, while I was eating a muffin for my breakfast, the bill was presented. Of course, the first day no notice was taken—the second, I was requested to settle it—the third, I was told that long credit was never given—the fourth, everybody seemed sulky around me—and the fifth, I was desired to quit the house with my baggage, Mr. Sneed observing that it was not his custom to detain gentlemen's effects. I readily took the hint, jumped into another hackney-coach, and drove to another hotel which I victimized in a similar manner. Thus for several months did I live like a king, passing from one inn to another, eating and drinking of the best, occasionally borrowing a sovereign of the landlord or five shillings of the waiter, ‘as I seldom had change for a five-pound note !’ At length it became noised abroad that numberless hotels had lately been made the abode of an individual who seemed to delight in evading payment to the utmost of his power, and as I knew that I was the person alluded to, my good sense told me that London inns were no longer the places for me. I was sitting in the coffee-room of one when this conviction, produced by the perusal of a small paragraph in a newspaper, intruded upon my tranquillity and made me spill the glass of Madeira I was coolly discussing. Hope did not however quite forsake me ;—I had lately fared so sumptuously, and had lived so splendidly upon my own wits—or rather upon the want of them in others—that I almost fancied the same mode of life could not fail to last in other quarters of the world.”

“But you have not had many opportunities of trying, my good friend,” remarked one of the company.

“You shall hear why not,” returned Mr. Twallop. “I am now going to relate one of the most important and—at the same time—ridiculous adventures of my life.”

“Now for it, then,” politely interrupted Mr. Foster.

“I said I was sitting over my Madeira in the coffee-room of a hotel,” proceeded Mr. Twallop ; “when, in the midst of my meditations, I accidentally overheard the conversation that passed between two or three individuals who were seated at an adjacent table.—‘What a pity it is,’ said one, ‘that we have no gentleman comedian who can take the hero’s part when we go to Canterbury next week !’—‘Yes,’ observed the second : ‘half-a-guinea for every night’s performance—that’s three times a week—and his travelling expenses to be paid into the bargain !’—‘Our troop is a fine one,’ cried the third ; ‘and if we only had a nice, light, gentlemanly-looking man, with a good voice, a good emphasis, a dapper figure, and a complacent smile, we might do.’—Hearing these words, I rose gently from my seat, as if I had not caught a syllable of the stranger’s conversation ; and walking up and down the room, I assumed many theatrical attitudes, then accomplished certain engaging movements, and presently began to repeat aloud some lines of poetry, as if in a fit of absence of mind—making choice of that emphatic passage from *Marmion* which begins thus :—

' Oh ! well, Lord Lion, hast thou said,
 Thy king from warfare to dissuade
 Were but a vain essay ;
 For, by Saint George, were that host mine,
 Not power, infernal nor divine,
 Should once to peace my soul incline,
 Till I had dimmed their armour's shine
 In glorious battle-fray !'

Having repeated these lines," proceeded Mr. Twallop, "I pretended to recollect myself, begged pardon for my abstraction, was afraid I had annoyed the gentlemen by my nonsense, and sate down once more. The strangers at the next table looked at each other, then at me, then at each other, and then at the cut of my coat.—' Good figure,' said one.—' Fine voice,' cried the second.—' Evidently one of the profession,' returned the first speaker.—' A fine day we have had, Sir,' began another, addressing himself to me, with a view of commencing an acquaintance.—I replied in the affirmative; and after a few general observations, was asked 'if I had ever figured in a theatre, since my qualifications for a member of the buskin were so indubitably exemplified?'—To this somewhat blunt demand I readily replied that the stage was not only my profession, but my delight. To be brief, before an hour had passed away, I completed an engagement to join a troop of actors, who were about to show their talents and edify the weak minds of the very worthy inhabitants of Canterbury. Glad to be enabled thus to quit London, which was becoming much too warm for delicate constitutions like mine—that is a vastly pretty allegory, by the bye—I mounted on the top of the coach with my numerous companions, and arrived at the ancient city of our destination."

"Were there any pretty girls amongst them, Twallop?" demanded Mr. Moffatt.

"Nonsense," exclaimed Mr. Twallop. "Bills were posted thickly throughout Canterbury—advertisements were inserted in the county papers—and in a couple of nights I commenced my stage career as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*. So well—though I say it, who should not say it, did I acquit myself (with the help of the prompter) that the company was perfectly convinced of my abilities in the profession; and I became greatly admired by the rest of the troop. One evening I had undertaken to enact the part of Romeo. Dressed in the most becoming style, I trod the stage with all the assurance which is felt by one who knows he is playing his part to perfection. I fancied that everybody was more struck by the elegance of my figure than by the language I had to utter. But towards the close of the piece—just as I was spouting forth with impassioned air, and while all the audience was dumb with attention—not a glance was elsewhere, save on me;—many a fair girl's cheek was moistened with a tear—many a tender lover softened into sympathy for the woes of the imaginary character I was performing)—just as I was spouting forth that passage, which begins with

' Ah ! dear Juliet !
 Why art thou yet so fair ?'

and ends as follows :—

‘ Oh ! here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last !’

—having uttered, I say, precisely those words, I *did* cast my eyes towards the pit to see how my eloquence was working upon the feelings of the lower orders of the audience—and those eyes fell upon the delightful visage of Mr. Sneeks, a Sheriff’s Officer from London !”

“ Sneeks of Chancery-lane ?” demanded Mr. Luffey.

“ Yes—Mr. Sneeks, seated next to a Canterbury bailiff,” continued Mr. Twallop. “ Three times did I repeat—

‘ Eyes, look your last !’

—and, beyond this sentence I could recollect no more. I stammered—my limbs tottered under me—I saw nothing but prisons before me ; gaols, instead of theatres, stared me in the face ; and I was borne off the stage in a fainting fit, amidst the clamorous applauses of the majority of the spectators, who fancied that the swoon was a part of the play and an excellent conclusion. Removed behind the curtain, I was soon brought to myself ; and the tailor of the troop poured a glass of half-and-half down my throat, which process considerably refreshed me.—‘ Avaunt, ye foul—unhallowed spirits !’ I exclaimed, extending my arm, and closing my fist, which latter came in contact with the tailor’s physiognomy and knocked him down. He perversely swore that I did it on purpose, and sneaked off, exclaiming ‘ that *that* was the reward people generally got in the world for doing a good action ; and that for the future he would see Mr. Romeo at the devil before he would give him a drop of heavy wet to save him from dying.’—The manager came to enquire the cause of my embarrassment. I told him the candid truth, and his countenance fell.—‘ Cannot we hide you for a few days, till we leave this place ?’ said he ; ‘ or will you go on to Dover and wait there till we join you ?’—This latter proposition I greatly preferred, and was engaged in expressing my thanks to the manager, when Mr. Sneeks and his Canterbury associate (who had found their ways behind the scenes) suddenly made their appearance, their ill-omened visages grinning with delight.—‘ Oh ! oh ! my tulip,’ said Mr. Sneeks ; ‘ I’ve got you at last—have I ? Who’s in Queer-street now, I’d like for to know ?’—‘ A trap, by G—d ?’ exclaimed one of the actors ; and a confused murmur ran through the troop.—While we were yet debating together, a deluge of water came pouring down from the platform where the scenes are drawn up, on the officer’s head, spattering myself and the manager slightly at the same time.—‘ Make thunder in their ears !’ cried the manager ; and in a moment a great sheet of copper was waved backwards and forwards against the physiognomies of the bailiffs, while two or three of the scene-shifters laid hold of the obnoxious intruders, and hustled them about upon the stage.—‘ Colour their faces, and powder their hair,’ continued the manager ; ‘ and tell Harlequin Dick and Limping Joe, and him who personated the dead man in last night’s piece—what’s his name again ?—to bring the brushes, with a couple of burnt corks.’—The rouge-pot was speedily produced—the powder was most plenteously distributed on the unfortunate Mr. Sneeks

and his friend ; then another deluge of water rendered them both fascinating objects, to the great amusement of the actresses who played them a thousand diverting little tricks.—‘That’s the way we serve such vagabonds as you,’ cried Harlequin Dick.—‘And that’s the way we finish the sport,’ exclaimed the dead man, kicking the officers down the narrow staircase, or rather ladder which led to the private door.”

“Then you wern’t taken that time,” said Mr. Foster.

“No—but on the following morning I received a letter,” continued Mr. Twallop, “which purported to be despatched from the resident manager of the Canterbury theatre himself; and which, after extolling my abilities to the skies, proposed a most lucrative engagement to me. I snapped at this offer, hastened to the place of *rendez-vous* named in the letter, and fell into the power of Mr. Sneeks and his brother bailiff, the latter of whom was duly armed with writs to ensure my capture.”

When this tale was brought to a conclusion, it was unanimously agreed by Messrs. Luffey and Moffatt and Lord Bilkemorl, that it would be expedient to sally forth and “have a lark;” but so soon as the nature of the lark, which was to consist of a small burglary in the room of Mr. Greening for the purpose of carrying off that gentleman’s larder and cellar, was made known, Mr. Twill prudently declined to form one of the party. He therefore paid for himself and companions, and retired to the coffee-house, where a bed had been prepared for him in the little bar before alluded to.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE READER IS MADE MORE INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED WITH
THE PREVIOUS HISTORY OF MR. AND MRS. SOMERVILLE, TO WHOM HE
HAS ALREADY BEEN ABRUPTLY INTRODUCED.

THE maiden name of Mrs. Somerville was Eliza Richards. She was the only daughter of most respectable parents who resided at a small town a few miles from London. Accident introduced to the family a gentleman of the name of Stanley, who soon became a frequent visitor at their house, and as his person and manners were equally agreeable, it is not to be wondered at if the tender heart of the young and beautiful Eliza soon entertained something more than a friendly sentiment for the accomplished Stanley. He was an individual of about three or four and thirty ; and a certain mystery which hung about him gave his character an additional degree of interest in the eyes of Eliza. He said that he lived in London—but he never mentioned his address. He seldom spoke of himself—he was evidently well acquainted with the highest members of fashionable society—and his education appeared to have been sedulously cared for. Neither his profession, if he had any, nor his means, nor his employments, were known to the family of the Richards. A deep obligation, of a pecuniary nature, under which Mr. Richards lay to this mysterious friend, was the origin of the intimacy ; and as Mr. Stanley had saved the family from the very abyss of ruin in a moment of extreme need, he was received into the house as a guardian angel—a saviour—a protector—whose right was to command and not to be questioned.

That sentiment, which was at first but one of interest commingled with another of gratitude, in the breast of Eliza, soon ripened into a more tender attachment; and her glowing bosom rose and sank rapidly when her glance met the eye of the reserved Stanley. He, on his part, was well skilled in investigating the character of any individual with whom he was an associate. Yes—even a few minutes' conversation would give him a more general idea of a person's disposition than would be learnt by others in the course of a week's intimacy. Full well had he perceived the increasing passion of the young Eliza; while he concealed his own, determining to wait for the first opportunity that might arrive to make himself master of her charms. Mysterious as was his behaviour, he ever kept up, and indeed essentially added to, the favourable impression he had made upon the family during the first few days of their acquaintance; and he had thus formed a better basis whereon to erect those trophies that should declare the misery of the whole, and the ruin of one of that family's members. He cared not, if in cutting off a single branch, the entire tree should sympathetically perish: he thought not that sorrow and remorse might drive an affectionate father and a loving mother to the depths of despair!

During the few hours which Stanley occasionally passed with Mr. Richards and his family, frequent were the bashful but languishing glances which Eliza cast, when she deemed herself unperceived, at the object of her affections; but the eye of him she loved was constantly fixed upon her, though none remarked its observation. Too much master of himself ever to be caught wandering, he never started when after a few minute's silence a word was addressed to him, and when he was really gazing on the bewitching countenance of Eliza.

Aristotle was right when he reckoned love amongst the number of virtues. A young and beautiful girl's earliest passion is the most sweet and tender sentiment that can be conceived. It is the attractive power to which all her other ideas incline: it is the spring of her thoughts, the guide of her meditations, the originator of her virgin dreams of future bliss. Such was the love of Eliza for Stanley. But, alas! poor girl—had she known that that love was returned only by a selfish and impure passion, many a heart-rending sigh, many a burning tear had been spared her!

At the back of Mr. Richards' dwelling was a spacious garden, with an arbour in a retired spot, surrounded by twining jessamine and by the clustering boughs of the sportive clematis. Thither the beams of the scorching meridian sun could but languidly penetrate—the odours of sweet flowers gave perfume to the evening breeze and pleasure to the sense that could enjoy them. It was such a spot as that where, in the poetry of the Persians, we read of the fond Meignoun whispering tales of love to his beautiful Leilah; or where Hafiz might have composed his admired poem to the roses in the bosom of his mistress Pancharillah. In this delightful place, Stanley and Eliza were one evening seated. He told her of the extent of his love, while she listened with rapture and joy: then he declared his intention—falsely declared his resolution of speedily communicating with her parents on the subject of an honourable marriage; and as he spoke those apparently honeyed words which came

from a venomous tongue, Eliza's heart beat high, and she returned the thrilling kiss he impressed upon her vermillion lips.

It was almost the delicious hour of sun-set. A stillness, which rendered the evening more enchanting, pervaded around—the flowers began to hang their heads, as it were, in preparation for slumber—and the sky became gradually darker as the God of Day sank towards the arms of his ocean-mistress. Such an hour to talk of love was fraught with danger; and Eliza's soul had dissolved into softness at the impassioned language and avowals of her companion. He felt his advantage—he consulted only his lustful passions—and in a moment of almost venial weakness, the beauteous—the innocent—the unprotected Eliza became the victim of the seducer!

When reason had resumed its throned seat, the weeping girl appealed to the honour of him to whom she had confided her own.

"My whole life," urged Eliza, "is now wrapped up in you—my existence depends on the way in which you requite my love. And remember, Stanley, that I was pure and innocent till you came: you have declared that I am your wife in the sight of heaven—Oh! now make me so in the eyes of man. For if you were to deceive me—"

"Deceive you, dearest," exclaimed the deceiver; "how can you utter such a word? Till the cold hand of Death shall plant its mark upon my brow, will I consult your felicity, and your's alone!"

"Oh! no—you could not deceive me!" cried the too-confiding girl; and as she uttered these words, she gazed so fondly on Stanley's countenance, that the glance she gave, ought to have thawed the icy indifference of his stony heart and rendered it capable of doing a deed of justice as well as of mercy.

For some time Stanley continued his visits as usual to the family of the Richards; and whenever Eliza urged him to agree to their speedy marriage, he invariably invented some trifling excuse to procure a longer delay. At length the unhappy girl became aware that the ceremony could not be procrastinated with safety to her honour and peace of mind; for in her bosom she bore a testimony of her frailty and of her love.

An opportunity of holding a serious conversation with Stanley was speedily sought for, and readily obtained. The fatal arbour was again the locality of the interview.

"You affirm that you love me very much," said Stanley, when Eliza had concluded her pathetic appeal to his feelings: "what would you say if I were to leave you for six months—never come near you till the end of that period, and then hasten to your arms to make you my wife? could you support so long an absence?"

"No—Stanley—it would kill me," returned Eliza: "and did I not know that you are not in earnest, I should faint at the very idea."

"What—are you so weak, my dear Eliza, that you could not support the temporary misfortunes of life?" asked Stanley.

"My nerves are strong enough to endure the common miseries of this world," said Eliza; "but were I to be informed that my beloved one had died—had left me—or had proved faithless—Oh! I could not bear up against *that*! The calamity would overwhelm me! But, wherefore these questions?"



'Oliza and the stranger!'



"Because—do not be alarmed, dearest Eliza," was the hesitating reply, "I have some unfavourable news to tell—and would gradually break them to you!"

"Speak—speak—for God's sake!" cried the agonized girl. "Have my parents refused their consent? Then I will hasten to them, throw myself at their feet," continued she, almost frantic, "bathe their hands with my tears, implore them not to seal my misery: and if that will not do—" she added bitterly—"I will confess all—my shame—my disgrace;—I will demand them to allow me the only means of covering my dishonour, and of making me happy!"

"Your parents have not refused, Eliza," said Stanley; "nor dare I ask their assent or dissent!"

"Oh! why, Stanley?" ejaculated the poor girl: "reflect on your promises—that if my parents refused approval, you would still make me your's. Reflect on all you have said, and do not—Oh! do not—for God's sake, do not deceive me! I am worthy of you, Stanley;—for I love—I adore—I respect you—I could lay down my feeble existence for your benefit!"—and when she had uttered these words, a violent flood of tears choked farther appeal.

The villain was startled. He had not well calculated her powers—he had deemed her to be stronger in mental energy than she really was: or rather, he had not fully reckoned the extent of her affection for him. Still, cost what it would, he was resolved to undeceive her that evening relative to his intentions of marriage, and thus rid himself of a connexion of which he was wearied, and which threatened to involve him in some embarrassment. But his task was more difficult than he had imagined it would be.

"I throw myself upon your mercy, your honour, your pity," exclaimed Eliza, when she was again able to give utterance to the syllables of despair. "If you reject the supplication of the wretched girl who loves you so tenderly, you will abandon her to the tomb of the distracted suicide! And shall my child be born in sin—born to a world that will despise it for its mother's crime—born to the withering care of scorn, contumely, and indigence? Oh! no—you cannot mean to treat me thus!"

"Let this farce finish," rudely observed the seducer: "and since you force me to the avowal, Eliza—I am married already!"

Eliza uttered one long and loud scream, and fainted upon the bench in the arbour where they were seated. When she recovered, she was in the arms of her parents: but Stanley was not near!

The parents discovered all; and Eliza did not attempt to conceal her condition. She had now but one constant sentiment in her mind—and that was the hope of a deadly vengeance upon her seducer. All her love turned to hate,—a woman's hate is terrible in itself and in its consequences,—and vengeance she was resolved to have. She had once entertained a proper pride in the consciousness of her beauty: but now she acutely felt how woe can humble the loftiest mind—how a sense of shame and degradation can bow down the haughty disposition—and how deviation from the severe path of morality which society has marked out for the female sex to pursue, can serve to lessen the elevated tone of assurance and cut short the syllables of pride. A hundred thousand arrows,

piercing her heart at that moment, could not have rent it more than did the sense of her dishonour flashing across her heated brain, and making her heart—that poor, lacerated, almost broken heart—palpitate fearfully! Yes—soothly—though this tale be written for purposes of amusement and diversion, yet may an useful moral be extracted from its pages—yet may the lesson Eliza's history contains be essentially beneficial to many!

Her father in vain sought for the seducer of his daughter in the vast metropolis, whither he hastened to demand satisfaction for the vile deed : he could obtain no traces of the wretch who had heaped ashes upon his grey hairs ; and he returned home, and sank gradually under the weight of the affliction. His heart-broken wife did not linger long behind him : the canker of care had crept into the bosom of that once happy family ; and Eliza was left an orphan at the age of eighteen to the tender mercies of an unsympathising world.

The evidence of her disgrace did not survive its birth, to remind a mother of her wrongs, or haply to be a source of consolation in the hour of affliction. The little innocent never breathed the air of this world :—and here Eliza was haply blest.

A noble-minded youth, of the name of Somerville, felt his heart expand with generous indignation at the tale of Eliza's wrongs. He had known the beautiful girl from her infancy : and, like her, he was also an orphan when he espoused her cause. The only source of support which he enjoyed was a precarious situation, with a circumscribed income, in a mercantile establishment. He however hastened to console the unhappy victim of a villain's treachery ; and, on account of their long acquaintance, he was listened to with gratitude and with attention.

There was something chivalrous and noble in the mind of this youth. He did not look upon Eliza's misfortunes with the same severe eye and unextenuating view which characterise the generality of this cold world's denizens : but he sincerely—deeply pitied an interesting victim, whose innocence had been triumphed over by one who was a disgrace to humanity.

Frequent interviews only inflamed the mind of young Somerville ; and he gradually acquired a deep thirst for that vengeance, a desire of which was consuming the heart of Eliza. By degrees the sympathy he had at first entertained for her, matured into a deep attachment : and he proposed to justify his right to avenge her wrongs by making her his wife. A terrible vow was sworn by both upon that occasion—a vow too deadly in its nature to be here recorded—but a vow the results of which materially affected their future destinies, and which will be farther developed in the progress of this tale. Suffice it to say, that those young persons—scarcely more than a mere boy and girl—that they reasoned in concert upon the plan they had in view, with the calmness and sense of more mature years; and that they joined their affections, their interests, and their fortunes together at the sacred altar where the priest blessed their honourable union !

But no auspicious star had shone upon their bridal. Somerville shortly lost his situation, and the evils of poverty overtook the luckless pair. Eliza struggled hard to gain a scanty subsistence by the aid of her needle ; and when the meal was but small, she feigned a want of that

appetite which only rendered privation the more intolerable. On his part, Somerville anxiously sought for employment, but could find none : and when, after a long day's walk from place to place in search of a situation, he returned home in the evening, he was always welcomed with a smile ; and perhaps these words were whispered in his ears, as he surveyed the more than frugal preparations for his repast—"I have had my supper long ago, and ate heartily : that is all for you!" And then Somerville would cast a melancholy glance at the half-famished appearance of his beloved wife ; and burning tears would start from his eyes.

By degrees the little furniture they possessed disappeared to procure victuals for the support of an existence which love and an unquenched thirst of the direst vengeance alone rendered tolerable ; and debts accumulated around them. The disgusting and inhuman rapacity of lawyers —those scourges in English society—those villains without a kind feeling—those monsters whom all good men ought to abhor, all prudent men to shun, and all bad men to bribe—the lawyers, I say, harassed and persecuted the wretched couple, and only rendered the chances of eventual payment the more problematical by the increase of costs. Somerville was unable to satisfy this horde of moral murderers ; and the ruthless scoundrels cast him into prison. Thither, however, did his affectionate wife follow him : and three weeks had they inhabited a room in the King's Bench, subject to a thousand miseries and privations, when they were unexpectedly relieved by the noble and generous behaviour of Mr. Twill.

CHAPTER V.

MR. TWILL IS REGALED WITH SEVERAL INTERESTING ANECDOTES WHICH TEND TO ILLUSTRATE THE NATURE OF THOSE PURSUITS THAT OCCUPY MANY GREAT MEN IN THIS METROPOLIS.—A SINGULAR SCENE AT WHICH MR. TWILL IS PRESENT.

Mr. Slapman Twill, having extricated himself from the bed and the bar in which he had slept, proceeded to the coffee-room to discuss his breakfast, in the middle of which he was interrupted by the entrance of a short gentleman, in a very shabby suit of black, and with one of those countenances which characterise the respectable Children of Israel. This gentleman wore a very dirty shirt, which he endeavoured to relieve by a white cravat only a trifle cleaner : but this attempt was ineffectual and may be termed a decided failure, especially as it naturally created in every observer's mind a species of comparison which must have ended in a way by no means creditable to the shirt. There was a meanness about this personage which diadems and regal robes could not have palliated, much less concealed ; he did not dare meet the glances of any one with whom he was conversing ; and if the rest of mankind only demonstrated the same primitive taste in reference to outward appearance, the trade of soap-boiler would speedily become extinct. The same contempt for all modern and polite institutions was manifested by the exceeding freedom

with which he drew a chair close to Mr. Slapman Twill, and dashed at once *in medias res* by enquiring of that gentleman "if he wanted to justify bail?"

Mr. Twill replied in the affirmative, adding that as his debts were large, he could not rely upon any of his tradesmen becoming security for him.

"What's the amount?" demanded the gentleman in black, whose name was Jacob Snatch.

"Six thousand, about," answered Mr. Twill.

"Give me sixty pounds for myself, and thirty for the bail—or say a cool hundred," observed Mr. Jacob Snatch, "and I'll bail you out in less than a week."

"If you mean me to give you the money before hand," objected Mr. Slapman Twill, "I'll just see you at the devil first."

"No such thing," returned Mr. Snatch, who probably did not wish to visit the person alluded to before his proper time. "All I want is for you to have the cash ready to hand over to me when I bring your discharge."

"Nothing can be fairer," said Mr. Twill. "But how the deuce you manage it, I really cannot tell."

"And I hope the judges can't either," exclaimed Mr. Snatch; then drawing his chair close up to Mr. Twill's, he added, "But do you really mean to say you don't know how it's done?"

"I really do not," returned Mr. Twill.

"Then I will tell you," continued Mr. Jacob Snatch, glancing suspiciously round the room. "Of course the bail is not worth a farthing—that at least you are aware of: and this is the way the affair is managed. When I send up my bail before the judge—I like it in chambers best—he of course asks them what they are.—'I am, my lord,' is perhaps the reply of the first, 'a wholesale dealer in Welsh bullocks. My partner has gone into Wales with a certain sum of money (naming an amount) to purchase cattle. Half of that cash belongs to me; and consequently my share of the business is more than double the debt for which I will bail the gentleman in prison.'—Of course this statement, which is as false as possible, is deliberately sworn to upon the Bible. Then, very probably, the plaintiff's lawyer has found out that these two bail, the second having told a similar story, are in arrears for rent, taxes, or poor-rates. They have their excuses—an intention to pay them in a day or two—inability on account of having made heavy discounts upon bills not falling due for a week or so—miscarriage of a letter from their partners—and a thousand such apologies. Nothing is easier, Mr. Twill, I assure you."

"It appears so, indeed," said Mr. Twill drily.

"Oh! I've had my experience, I assure you," exclaimed Mr. Jacob Snatch: he had acquired it in all the dens of villainy in London and elsewhere. "I began the world as a banker's clerk, and sate scribbling for a petty salary from nine in the morning till four in the afternoon, behind a desk. My master, Sir Luke Blossom, was frequently closeted very long with the cashier—a circumstance that did not escape my notice; and their looks were often troubled when a cheque for a large sum was presented. However, I stayed six or seven years as a mere clerk in the

bank without ever pretending to have remarked anything extraordinary, when the cashier suddenly died. There were several clerks of a much longer standing than myself; nevertheless, Sir Luke called me into his office and said, 'I have seen something in your countenance and behaviour that pleases me; and I have a mind to place you in the capacity now rendered vacant by the cashier's decease. In fine, do you feel yourself competent to undertake the office?'—I replied in the affirmative—and he hinted somewhat concerning future partnership. I was pleased; and he continued, having first made me promise not to reveal what he was about to confide to me.—'I am going,' said he, 'to put the highest confidence in you: the secret I shall reveal renders your duty still more difficult as a cashier?'—I was expecting to hear the amount of his vast treasures, and where they were kept, when, to my astonishment, he proceeded in quite a different strain.—'Can you conceive,' enquired he, 'that for the last twenty years this bank has been carried on without a single sixpence in the shape of capital?'—I was thunderstruck.—'Yes,' cried he, 'there is not a thousand pounds at this moment in the cash-room: if a cheque comes in for fifteen hundred, we are ruined. The firm, which is very infirm, depends upon whether the next person who comes in wishes to draw or to make a deposit.'—At that moment a clerk entered to say that five thousand and odd pounds were just paid into the Bank.—'It is thus,' proceeded Sir Luke coolly, when the clerk had retired (for he was accustomed to these reverses of fortune) 'that we do business. Your fingers will not be worn out by counting coin: but your salary shall be handsome as long as the Bank exists. Are you satisfied with the bargain?'—What could I say? I accepted the office?"

"And how long did the Bank continue from that period?" enquired Mr. Twill, much amused with the narrative of the individual who had seen the world.

"About four years," returned Mr. Snatch. "One day I was in Sir Luke's private office, when a knock came at the door as the clock was striking four, while we were about to shut up, congratulating ourselves upon having shaved very narrowly with our cash during the day. Sir Luke pushed me into a closet, for there were but a few hundreds left; and a particular friend of his entered the room, bearing his own cheque for a thousand pounds, and apologising for coming so late.—'Pon my word, my dear Brown,' replied Sir Luke, not at all embarrassed, 'the cashier is this moment gone, and has unfortunately taken the key: but I will send to his lodgings for it.'—A clerk was accordingly dispatched to my apartments: he of course returned with a message that I was not there.—'How very unlucky!' exclaimed Sir Luke. 'That cursed cashier—I'll discharge him, by God!'—'It is not of much importance, my dear friend,' returned Mr. Brown: he accordingly took his leave."

"A narrow escape," said Mr. Twill. "But what ruined the Bank at last?"

"One day, when we really had plenty of cash in the safe," answered Mr. Snatch, "an old lady fainted in the Bank through sudden indisposition. The news spread like wild-fire—the report was vested with a thousand exaggerations—and an immediate run upon the establishment was the consequence. Sir Luke very coolly stepped into a hackney-coach and went home. I lost my place, and was ruined."

"Upon my word, you are a most extraordinary man," said Mr. Twill, surveying Mr. Jacob Snatch with an air of considerable admiration and respect.

"So the gentleman said, whom I got out of the Fleet, when he was arrested for eight thousand pounds," ejaculated Mr. Snatch. "That was the most glorious achievement of my life!"—and Mr. Snatch smacked his lips, as the pleasing reminiscence stole through his mind.

"Pray let me hear it," cried Mr. Twill.

"Certainly you shall," rejoined Mr. Snatch; and without further preface, he narrated the anecdote as follows. "A gentleman was arrested for eight thousand pounds—he accordingly passed over to the Fleet. He had had several dealings with me in the discount way, and he applied to me for bail upon this occasion. It was therefore arranged between us that I was to have three hundred pounds for my trouble, if the plan succeeded. I went straight to the detaining creditor and offered him my security on a bill at three months for the whole amount. The creditor bit at this proposal, but of course was desirous of ascertaining if I were in a solvent position. For this enquiry I was fully prepared; and I informed him that I was a great discounter, and that I had in my possession the bills of several eminent merchants, who were pinched for a moment, to the amount of eleven thousand pounds. He asked to see them. I made him take a most solemn oath not to reveal my confidence to the prejudice of the merchants I had alluded to: a quantity of bills was then produced, all drawn up in proper style—these I had forged for the purpose, and had put some great names upon them. The creditor was satisfied: he took my security and gave the gentleman his liberty. Just before my bill became due, I became bankrupt; and thus ended the matter."

Mr. Snatch, having terminated his anecdote, and Mr. Twill his breakfast, those gentlemen separated, the one to look out for a couple of insolvent bail for his new client, and the other to pay his promised visit to Mr. and Mrs. Somerville.

The reader may easily imagine that Mr. Twill was received with the most lively demonstrations of gratitude. The blue eyes of the lovely Eliza expressed all she felt for his noble interference in their behalf, and Somerville himself clasped with fervour the outstretched hand of his benefactor.

"Had it not been for you," said Somerville, "my poor wife would have sank beneath an accumulation of sorrow. I owe you an eternal debt of gratitude."

"Not at all, my dear Sir," replied Mr. Twill. "I should be very glad to know that you were likely to leave this wretched place. It is not an over comfortable abode for a lady."

"Would to God that there were a chance!" exclaimed Eliza, clasping her hands together, and sighing deeply as she uttered these words.

"Are your debts very heavy?" enquired Mr. Twill. "I do not ask from impertinent motives."

"About fifty pounds would clear me," replied Somerville: "but to the hand of charity I will never be beholden for my release; and friends—friends I have none!"

"Cannot you resort to the Insolvents' Court for relief in this dilemma?"

asked Mr. Twill : "for if so, I will instruct my solicitor to prepare the necessary deeds— free of any expense to you," added Mr. Twill in a low voice.

"To obtain my liberty on such terms is a tempting offer," said Somerville after a moment's pause ; "for I have a sacred duty to perform—a vow to fulfil—an oath to accomplish which my imprisonment renders ineffectual. I have a wrong to avenge upon a villain whom I know not, but whom I will find—a wrong, which only blood can expiate ! But excuse this warmth on my part—I have no right to intrude my griefs or my designs upon you."

"Pardon me," cried Mr. Twill. "I feel interested in your welfare, and though I am but a *roué* on town, I flatter myself I can sympathize in the distresses of others."

"Your conduct is too noble to have many imitators," said Somerville mournfully : "friendship and charity now-a-days are merely conventional terms, without reality to justify their use. But I cannot accept your offer ; and in declining it, allow me to tender you my most sincere and heart-felt thanks."

"And mine," added Eliza in a voice so soft and musical, it must have touched a tender chord even in the heart of a misanthrope.

Mr. Twill was about to persist in his design of enabling Somerville to have recourse to the Insolvents' Court, when Mr. Wusted made his appearance with a letter ; and having delivered it, he disappeared again. It was addressed to Mrs. Somerville ; but when she cast her eye over the superscription, she started, turned deadly pale, and dropped the letter upon the floor. Her husband hastily picked it up, tore it open, and read the following words :—

"Accident made me acquainted with your misfortunes, which I hasten to relieve to the utmost of my power. The messenger, who bears this, is instructed by me to discharge your liabilities at the prison-gate : the sum I inclose you will be continued quarterly, if you apply at the banking-house of Messrs. ————— and Co.

"WILLIAM STANLEY."

The letter contained a Bank of England note for one hundred pounds.

"The wretch—the villain!" ejaculated Somerville, flinging the letter upon the table, and tearing the Bank note into a thousand pieces : "I will not owe my liberty to him ;" and with these words he rushed hastily out of the room.

The letter had fallen with the address upwards. Mr. Twill, who had been a most interested though silent spectator of the above scene, accidentally cast his eyes upon it : but when he saw the writing, he also gave a violent start, and then glanced at it again to ascertain if a suspicion which he entertained were correct.

"Yes—it must be—it is his handwriting?" muttered Mr. Twill ; then addressing himself to Eliza, who sat in a state of mute astonishment and surprise, he hastily added, "Madam—are you acquainted with the individual who wrote that letter?"

"Oh ! yes—indeed, I know him much too well," was the reply, delivered in a tone of bitterness and hate which seemed to suit but indiffer-

ently with the gentle disposition of Mrs. Somerville, but Mr. Twill knew not the history of her sufferings and her wrongs!

"His name—his name?" said Mr. Twill, more hastily than before.

"Stanley," was the answer; "but do you know him? are you acquainted with the place of his residence?" demanded Eliza, starting from her chair, and appealing to Mr. Twill with the most breathless anxiety.

"I am mistaken," said that gentleman; "I do not know a person of the name of Stanley."

At that moment Somerville returned in haste to the apartment. His looks were wild, his hair in disorder, and the perspiration stood in large drops upon his forehead.

"It was too late," said he, sinking upon a chair, "the money was paid, and the messenger had departed before I arrived at the gate. And, now, Eliza—we owe our freedom to *him*!"

"We will not accept of it at his hands," cried the young wife. "Oh! no—we will sooner stay and die together in this gaol!"

"It is too late—I am no longer a prisoner!" exclaimed Somerville: "we cannot stay—there is no alternative—everything is paid even to the very fees. But I did not take his proffered money," added the young man, grinding his teeth together, and stamping his foot violently upon the carpet where some of the pieces of the Bank note lay.

"Then we must be indebted to *him* for this boon?" said Eliza, with even more of bitterness than that which Mr. Twill had ere now remarked in her tone and manner, when she alluded to the author of her husband's freedom.

"Yes—we must leave this place forthwith," returned Somerville: then, as if a sudden idea had struck his imagination, he emphatically and quickly added, "But this is good for us:—let us rejoice at the circumstance we were just now deplored. The bankers, to whom he has referred us, can give us his address!"

No sooner had Somerville uttered these words, than Eliza applied herself with the utmost alacrity to pack up the few articles of clothing which belonged to her domestic stock. The suggestion of her husband seemed to have infused new life into her frame; and she hastened the preparations for departure with as much speed as if she were desirous of hurrying to throw herself at the feet of her liberator. Mr. Twill marked all this with an astonishment which he could not conceal; but the expression of his countenance was not noticed by either Somerville or his wife.

"Adieu, my dear friend—my benefactor," exclaimed the grateful young man, when everything was ready for his departure; "a thousand thanks for your generous and disinterested kindness to me; and believe me that I shall take the earliest opportunity of repaying—"

"Enough of that," interrupted Mr. Twill. "You are going from prison without a single shilling in your pocket to obtain even a lodging. Allow me to offer you the loan of a few pounds;" and Mr. Twill took a handful of sovereigns from his pocket, which he forced upon Somerville in spite of his remonstrances and repeated refusals.

Mr. Twill accompanied the young couple to the lobby where he bade farewell to them, and where he was again rewarded with the thanks of those whom he had thus twice rendered happy.





The King's Bench Prison!

CHAPTER VI.

A TRUE AND GRAPHIC SKETCH OF A PLACE BELONGING TO THE SOVEREIGNS OF THIS REALM AND TO DECAYED GENTLEMEN IN GENERAL.

THE general appearance of the King's Bench at about eleven o'clock in the morning, affords to the eye of the new-comer or *amateur*-visitor a scene of varied but peculiar interest. Half-a-dozen gentlemen, some with coats, and some without, lounge idly up and down the narrow walk opposite the coffee-house: others, in dressing gowns at variance with soap and water, plant themselves like faded flowers against the walls of a detached building, called the State-House, and stare at a row of very dirty-looking people seated upon the bench at the tap-room door opposite. A somewhat lame man, dressed in black, is bustling about, between the coffee-house and the State-House, and the State-House and the Tap (as the place where the beer is drawn has been elegantly denominated) with newspapers in his hand; and to every one of his customers whom he encounters, he offers "a little *Chronicle*" or "a little *Advertiser*," according to the nature of such customer's political opinions, with which the news-man is perfectly well acquainted. In the Tap itself one of the tradesmen of the Bench is most likely engaged in the pleasant morning's occupation of calling some gentleman every vile name he can think of, because the aforesaid gentleman has got rather deep into the tradesman's books, and does not seem very much disposed to get out of them.

In the lower lobby, a knot of four or five individuals have assembled round the one-armed turnkey, and are engaged in expressing their opinions of the Duke of Wellington, Lord Melbourne, and other great men, with as much ease and independence of manner as if their sentiments were really calculated to reach the ears, and make some impression upon the minds, of those whose characters they were discussing. In the little yard between the two lobbies, Doctor Twoynton is walking up and down with Lord Bilkemorl, Doctor Twoynton living in the Rules and being very much afraid to venture into the prison, because of the uncere monious manner in which the inhabitants of that tenement are accustomed to apply for any little monies that may be owing to them.

In a watch-box near the gate of the lower lobby is a horrible looking old man with a large fur cap upon his head, holding a tin cannister in his hand and shaking it with all his might to make the coppers inside resound upon the ears of visitors and thus elicit a precarious charity. Near this box, and gazing towards the racket-ground, because he has got nothing else to do, stands a young gentleman, with a cigar in his mouth, having never had one out of it since seven o'clock in the morning at which hour he rose. At a little distance from him stands Mr. Samuel Luffey, with his hands and nothing else in his pockets, and looking more like an insolvent prize-fighter or bully than anything else which strikes us at this moment. Mr. Luffey is busily engaged in watching his friend Mr. George Moffatt, who is seated upon the steps of the State-house, with a cigar in his mouth and a short hooked stick in his hand. None of these gentlemen appear to have any possible thing of importance to do; nor do

they seem as if they had ever been brought up anywhere else save in a debtors' prison.

At that end of the bench under the Tap, which is nearest to the lobby, are seated two or three individuals, whom, had they been free, one would have suspected of the last murder or burglary that had been committed in the neighbourhood. These are the criers, who, with the exception of old Fork, generally amuse themselves in stealing little articles of apparel, that they may be employed to look for them, and rewarded for finding them. A tall, gaunt, thin old woman, with a small bonnet tastefully perched upon the very top of her head, and with a man's great coat wrapped round her person, is endeavouring to persuade a prisoner that her fish is fresh; and he, on his part, begs to assure her, in the fashionable language of the Bench, "that it is no go." He then probably recommends her to visit the infernal regions immediately, and concludes by informing her that he will see her there before he will purchase her fish. This the old lady takes in a very quiet manner, use being second nature.

From the window of the corridor immediately over the Tap, and fronting the State-House, protrudes a head and a pea-shooter; and the stout gentleman at the State-House door is wondering what it can be that hits him a smart blow at certain intervals, first on the top of the nose, then over the right eye, and then upon the left cheek. Another individual, seated underneath the aforesaid window, is suddenly surprised by the fall of a small deluge of water upon his head and shoulders; and a drunken fellow, in a sack-cloth great coat, is ejected from the Tap at the same moment by some very particular gentlemen who have only been drinking incessant pots of beer for the previous two hours and a half—that is, from the moment the Tap was opened in the morning.

On the racket-ground there is a very important match being played, upon which twenty gentlemen on one side have actually bet and ventured two sovereigns amongst them against a like floating capital belonging to twenty gentlemen on the other. But as no prisoner in the Bench is deemed sufficiently secure to be entrusted with so large a deposit, the money has been placed in the hands of the lessee of the Tap. One side is certain that Buffer Bill will win the game; and the other is equally sanguine in the cause of Seedy Jim: but Seedy Jim's friends are doomed to be disappointed, because that private gentleman very prudently suffered himself to be bribed to yield up the victory to his antagonist, an arrangement by which the loser was the gainer of a guinea.

On the pavement of the parade-ground there is a farther supply of gentlemen in dressing-gowns or in their shirt-sleeves. Some of them are gathered in groups together, and have occasional recurrence to a pewter pot which stands in a window-ledge behind them: others are breakfasting and taking an early luncheon at the same time, off a pipe of strong tobacco; and a little farther on a third party are engaged in discussing little matters as food for the mind, that species of aliment being the only one they stand the slightest chance of imbibing throughout the day.

Such are the principal exterior characteristics of the King's Bench Prison: but what are the interior? Either the most squalid poverty or the most shameless debauchery! The former, however, for the most

part prevails ; and individuals, who endeavour to maintain a decent appearance upon the parade-ground, have left hungry and wretched wives and children without food in their miserable rooms. To those chambers they dare not return often in the course of the day, because they are compelled to submit to the clamours of their families for bread : and they prowl about till they have borrowed or acquired, by less honest means, the wherewith to carry their children a meal. It is terrible—most terrible, the pinching poverty which many endure in that prison : it is indescribable—the misery which is concealed by those gloomy thick walls. The voice of despair is not loud in that gaol, because a remnant of pride subdues its tone to a hoarse whisper : the tear of penitence and sorrow seldom dims an eye in that dwelling, because it is too late for the one, and the other is drowned in dissipation and debauchery.

There have been instances where men's wives have not stirred from their rooms—those close confined cells—for twelvemonths together, because they had not clothes fit to put on : there have been cases of such profound destitution, that a last shirt or coat have been pledged to procure a meal ; and then the unhappy prisoner remains in bed, with a feigned illness, until some lucky supply enables him to redeem his vesture.

The tales which many of the char-women could narrate concerning the shifts to which the various families they have waited upon have been put, are curious and interesting to a degree. One woman, during a period of four months, supported a gentleman and his family entirely from her own slender purse ; and many a time has she pawned her Sunday gown to provide the meal for the day. She herself is the thermometer of the Bench ; for if she be well dressed, then "there is a little money about," to use her own language—but if her wardrobe be slender and shabby, then "the whole Bench is hard up." We are sorry to be compelled to relate that this latter state of things usually prevails during eleven months in the year.

A person with money can make himself comfortable, if not positively happy, almost anywhere ; and as Mr. Slapman Twill did not lack immediate supplies of this very necessary and desirable article, he felt none of those slight inconveniences to which many of the prisoners were compelled to submit—such as going without a dinner, or employing two whole days in looking for one. He was moreover considerably courted, on account of his "ready money propensities," as Mr. Moffatt expressed himself, by the inmates of the Bench : so, the moment he had bade adieu to Mr. and Mrs. Somerville at the lower lobby, he was accosted by several who had hitherto remained idly lounging about, as described above.

"So Somerville is out," said Mr. Samuel Luffey, whose dry dirty hair seemed as if it would have been essentially benefited by an application of Mr. Macalpine's African Balm.

Mr. Twill returned an affirmative.

"And I suppose you'll take the room at the coffee-house which he has left?" continued Mr. Luffey.

Mr. Twill intimated that such was his intention.

"Of course you'll always dine there," added Mr. George Moffatt, in a tone which seemed to say, "I hope so, for then I'll dine with you."

Mr. Twill this time bowed an answer.

"And what are you going to do with yourself in the evening?" continued Mr. Moffatt. "There's a supper-party up at Skeffington's room; and if you like to join us, you are welcome. Indeed Skeffington desired me to ask you. So I'll come and fetch you at ten."

"I shall be most happy," returned Mr. Twill; and he was about to make some observation relative to the amusements of the prisoners, when he felt his arm suddenly pulled; and, on turning round, he encountered the glance of a person whom he well knew. A tall handsome man, of aristocratic mien and commanding air, stood near him; and with him did Mr. Twill immediately walk aside, having begged his prison-friends to excuse him for a few moments.

As the individual, whom we have just introduced upon the stage of this most true history, will probably enact an eminent part in the hereafter course of our narrative, we shall at once present the reader with a minute description of his character and accomplishments.

Sir Henry Hunter was a man of rank and fortune. One of the most ancient baronetcies had descended to him through a long line of ancestors; and broad lands afforded ample revenues to support the dignity and honour of the title. But the one, in the care of its present possessor, appeared to run every risk of being sullied and tarnished; and the latter stood an equal chance of being shortly mortgaged to the extent of their full value. He had not yet reached the meridian of life; but his years had been passed in scenes of such continued dissipation and excess, that in mind and ideas he was an old man, *blazé* of all eligible enjoyment, and disgusted with all moderate degree of pleasure. His constant aim was therefore to seek for new sources of bliss or amusement; and the greater the danger that attended these pursuits, the more was the excitement agreeable to him. Like the huntsman, whose spirits rise in proportion to the speed with which his gallant steed bears him over rivulet and gate, Sir Henry willingly threaded those paths which, though intersected with many briars, eventually conducted him, who was arduous enough to pursue their mazes, to an arbour of roses. He had been married when very young; but suddenly his wife disappeared from the circle of her friends; and various were the rumours originated by this mysterious circumstance. Some supposed, that, driven to desperation by the conduct of her husband, she had put an end to her own existence: others believed that a sudden, though voluntary, separation had caused her to retire to some distant spot to conceal her sorrows from the eyes of the world; and a third portion of her acquaintance did not hesitate to drop dark hints of unfair play on the part of her husband.

But be this as it may—the circumstance was but a topic for a few weeks' conversation; and others of greater interest speedily usurped its place. Sir Henry gradually withdrew himself from that society in which he had been formed to move; and his pursuits, whatever they might be, were entrusted to none. He gave up his residence in town, and reduced his establishment, shortly after the disappearance of his wife, as much with a view of being more independent in reference to his mode of life, as on account of compulsory motives of economy.

To look more profoundly into the soul of this individual, will not afford a more satisfactory picture than the one already drawn. Believing not

in the existence of posthumous worlds, he dreaded nought hereafter; secure in his own cunning and subtlety, he feared not the vengeance of the laws of his country. Whether he looked backward or forward, he was equally calm; whether he contemplated his past life, or speculated on the probable destinies that awaited him, he ever preserved the unvaried equanimity of his mind. For him the night had no terrors. Conscience, which is not the effect of innate ideas—but of a love of social order, had no stings for him. He had converted the follies, the failings, or the vices of others into so many sources of advantage or pleasure to himself; and of these achievements he was perhaps proud. Yet this little occasional vanity was never perceptive: a partial sentiment of pride, by reason of the prosperous results of his numerous plans, often lifted up his head to scorn the generality of the world; but he did not suffer himself to be taken off his guard during those moments.

Having thus sketched the principal characteristics of Sir Henry Hunter, let us wait only to observe that he was Mr. Twill's first cousin, ere we proceed with the thread of our narrative.

"I am deeply indebted to you for this visit, Hunter," said Mr. Twill, as he walked towards the Coffee-house with his haughty relative.

"I should have called upon you yesterday afternoon; but certain reasons prevented me," was the reply. "Indeed, I only received your letter late. The bill is for five thousand pounds, you say?"

"Of which I had but a small portion, if you recollect," added Mr. Twill.

"What matters it now, how the proceeds were disposed of?" demanded the baronet sternly: "our present business is to concert measures for your release."

"I have already arranged for bail," observed Mr. Twill; "but my purpose is not to leave England. The measure I am about to adopt will gain time—and that is all. The moment Term begins, I must render to stand the result."

"Trust to me to settle the affair within a month or six weeks," said Sir Henry.

"Can I rely upon your ability?" enquired Mr. Twill.

"Cousin," exclaimed the baronet, turning sharply round upon his relative, "did I ever fail to achieve that which I taught you to believe I could perform?"

"Never—but this is a more serious matter," replied Mr. Twill.

"Rest assured that it will not baffle my powers," rejoined Sir Henry.

The latter part of this conversation took place by the Coffee-house door, at which the two gentlemen had stopped: and when Sir Henry Hunter had convinced his cousin that the subject of their discourse should be arranged to his entire satisfaction, Mr. Twill proposed the discussion of a light luncheon in his own room.

"The very thing I was thinking of," echoed a voice, just as Mr. Twill had made the above-mentioned proposition.

"What?—is it you, my lord?" cried Mr. Twill, glancing round, and perceiving the head and part of the body of Bilkemorl hanging out of the window on the left-hand side of the door. The window itself belonged to a room in the coffee-house which was farmed by a prisoner for the purpose of serving as ale-house and cigar-divan to the whole Bench.

"Yes, to be sure it's me," returned Lord Bilkemorl; and as if to bring some characteristic peculiarity of his own to corroborate the identity, he raised a pot of porter to his lips, nodded familiarly to both Mr. Twill and the baronet, and then buried his face for some minutes in the pewter vessel. "Cold and refreshing," he observed, as he placed the pot upon the window-ledge. "But didn't you say something about lunch, old fellow? I'm infernally hungry, myself, and shall be happy to join you. I just left Twoynton outside: poor fellow, he hasn't a rap—or else I should have borrowed it. Ha! ha!"

"I did say something about luncheon," murmured Mr. Twill, glancing towards his relation; "but ——"

"But you don't know what to order, eh?" interrupted Lord Bilkemorl. "Oh! I'll manage *that* for you. But who's your friend? Why don't you introduce us? Pray take some porter, Sir."

This last adjuration was very politely addressed to Sir Henry Hunter, who only acknowledged his lordship's kindness through the *medium* of the most contemptuous glance, and a curl of the lip which expressed the most withering scorn, that had ever assailed the noble prisoner. It did not, however, appear that Lord Bilkemorl cared very much for the stranger's indignation; indeed, it is most likely that his feelings had been very much blunted by the familiarity of the low creatures with whom he had just been drinking their own peculiar beverage. At all events, he observed that as Mr. Twill's friend wouldn't take a pull at the pot, he (Lord Bilkemorl) *would*; whereupon his lordship took a draught which was so deep, that it reached to the very bottom of the vessel. In other words, the whole of the porter disappeared down his lordship's throat.

"Twill," said Sir Henry Hunter, after a moment's pause, "I cannot stay with you any longer. I have an appointment which I dare not break. It is now half-past twelve o'clock;" added the baronet, lifting a handsome gold Breguet watch from his waistcoat pocket, carelessly referring to it, and then returning it to its *sanctum*.

"Devilish handsome watch, that," cried Lord Bilkemorl.

Sir Henry Hunter darted another look of the most sovereign contempt at his lordship, who, so far from being dismayed or abashed by a repetition of conduct which he was well accustomed to, proceeded to inform his hearers that he himself had once had a very beautiful little ticker—he had never paid for it, by the bye—but that he had long ago confided it to the more eligible custody of his father's brother—a figure of speech by which he intended to imply that he had pawned it.

Sir Henry Hunter would not suffer himself to be prevailed upon to partake of any refreshment. He pleaded a pressing engagement, and, glad to escape from the vulgarity and impertinence, as he denominated the peculiarities, of Lord Bilkemorl, took his departure, having reiterated his promise to emancipate his cousin from the great liability he had incurred, and for which he was imprisoned.

But scarcely had Sir Henry passed the threshold of the lower lobby, when he turned hastily back, and retraced his steps to the Coffee-house door, where he again found Mr. Twill, whom he drew aside, and addressed as follows:—

"My dear friend, allow me to offer you a little advice. Do not be too generous with your wine, nor too liberal with your money, in this

odious place. The specimen of its aristocracy, which I have just seen in an ale-house window, drinking porter from a pewter pot, is anything but favourable. Pray, take my advice."

"Thank you," said Mr. Twill ; "they can't get very much out of me."

"In cases of extreme distress," resumed the baronet, "like that which you alluded to in your letter—what was the person's name?"

"Somerville," said Mr. Twill ; "and, by the way—while I think of it—let me tell you that he was liberated a couple of hours ago. It was the most extraordinary scene in the world;"—and Mr. Twill related all that had passed immediately previous to Somerville's departure.

"Well," continued Sir Henry, "in such cases, of course be charitable. Adieu—and excuse me for taking upon myself the office of Mentor. My experience has not been purchased at a very cheap rate. Farewell."

And the baronet departed, with an injunction to his cousin to write to him the moment he obtained his liberty.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MANNER IN WHICH MR. SKEFFINGTON CONCOCTS AND GIVES A SUPPER UPON A VERY SPLENDID SCALE TO A VERY SPLENDID SOCIETY, AND THE ADVENTURES ATTENDING THE SAME, ARE RELATED IN THIS CHAPTER.

AT ten o'clock, in the evening—true to his promise, Mr. Moffatt called upon Mr. Twill to conduct him to Mr. Skeffington's room, in which very great preparations had been made for the entertainment of the distinguished guests who had been invited.

A small table, scarcely large enough to dine four comfortably, had been spread with knives and forks for ten. At each corner of this table stood a black quart bottle with a lighted candle in it, Mr. Skeffington having eschewed the use of his solitary brass candle-stick, because the four substitutes were more uniform. Two wash-hand-stand pitchers—one blue, without a handle ; and the other white, with a piece of putty to stop up a small hole in its right side—had been filled with gin-punch, and stood to cool outside of the window. Mr. Skeffington himself had made the lobster-salad ; and his domestic, or char-woman, had cut the sandwiches : but of these latter Mr. Skeffington himself did not intend to partake, inasmuch as he had a painful reminiscence that the aforesaid char-woman had not washed her hands during the interval between her afternoon's occupation of cleansing the floor of his room, and the passage outside, and the less arduous employment of cutting the sandwiches. But as "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," he did not intend to confide his own secrets to his guests : so he made up his mind to allow them "to pitch into the sandwiches, which he knew they'd do, while he walked into the lobster-salad." Twas thus he had expressed himself to his char-woman ; and it was thus that the estimable female herself advised him to act. But to proceed.

Now two tumblers for ten persons to drink out of, were somewhat a scanty supply, even making every possible allowance for the accom-

modating spirit of the guests, a couple of whom might very well have drank out of the jugs. But—*aide-toi, et le ciel t'aidera*—as the French say: so Mr. Skeffington pressed his own three tea-cups into the service of the evening, and the gentleman who occupied the next room was induced to lend his own earthenware to make up the deficiency.

"Them is great pints gained," observed the char-woman: and she was right—especially where quarts were going to be drunk.

"Well Mary," said Mr. Skeffington, when those elaborate preparations were accomplished, "what do you think of the spread?"

"Slap up," was that sharp-sighted female's reply. "But I'll just run down to Overall's and get up the pie, an' then I may go, 'spose."

The monosyllable "Sir" is never used by the domestics in the King's Bench, that establishment being deemed a republican community where all distinctions are merged in the important considerations of "them as pays, and them as doesn't pay." Mr. Skeffington was not therefore angry at having been adjured without a title or a name: his only surprise was that he had not been called plain Skeffington at once.

"Yes, Mary," was his immediate reply: "and get up the half-and-half at the same time. I wish to God I had my coat here: it *does* look so confounded odd to sit down in one's dressing-gown."

"Well, I'm sure *you* can't complain," cried Mary; "for there's poor Midgely has been in bed, without his trousers, this fortnit come Vensday, and he his-self enjoying the very best health in the world. He says he shouldn't care a fig if so be he was raly ill."

This amiably-administered consolation, together with a draught of gin punch from the white jug, (the deficiency in which he immediately supplied with some pure pump water, *that* being more wholesome, he observed, than adding raw spirits) entirely reconciled Mr. Skeffington to the necessity of doing the honours of his repast in his dressing-gown, which would not have been so bad if it had only been washed within the previous month or six weeks. It was, however, no use repining; so the pie and the beer were sent for; and the appearance of those articles quite raised Mr. Skeffington's spirits again—especially as he had entertained certain doubts and misgivings as to whether the pie would have been sent at all, save on ready-money terms, with which no gentleman could possibly think of complying.

At nine o'clock, the cry of "All—l—l—l—l Out," compelled the char-woman to leave her master to his own meditations, till the hour of ten, when the guests arrived most punctually. There were Lord Bilke-morl, Mr. Samuel Luffey, Mr. George Moffatt, Mr. Twill, Mr. Greening, the Reverend Alfred Swiggle, Mr. Twallop, Mr. Mopus, Doctor Twoynton (who had stayed in for the purpose, the idea of a good supper and some gin-punch having got the better of his fears concerning his creditors, to whom jointly and collectively his debts did not amount to nineteen shillings sterling) and lastly Mr. Skeffington himself; thus composing a party of ten at a little table already groaning beneath the weight of good things.

Although it were in the frigid month of October, and a cold biting wind blew from the north-east, Doctor Twoynton made his appearance in a pair of nankin trousers; and very much obliged to Providence he ought to have been that he had any trousers at all; inasmuch as the



The Supper scene in the
King's Bench Prison.

tailor, who formerly cut his clothes, had lately cut his acquaintance, and Lord Bilkemorl's ward-robe boasted of nothing superfluous. Mr. Mopus was attired in a velveteen shooting jacket and striped trousers; and Mr. Alfred Swiggle in a very old Petersham great coat, and white duck pantaloons.

"Make yourself at home, Twill," said Mr. Skeffington with most bewitching ease of manner: "we don't stand upon ceremony here."

And indeed they did not; for while Lord Bilkemorl helped himself to about one third of the meat-pie, Doctor Twoynonton made a desperate assault upon the blue jug; and raising it to his mouth in imitation of the primitive simplicity of the early Britons or Anglo-Saxons, he nearly emptied it before he handed it to Mr. Moffatt. The Reverend Alfred Swiggle, who had been drinking the whole day with his equals, as he termed the frequenters of the Tap, just partook of seven consecutive tumblers of half-and-half, and then deposited himself quietly and comfortably under the table, where he immediately fell asleep.

"How I hate this dreadful gaol," said Mr. Greening, when he had imbibed as much lobster-salad as he cared for. "There isn't a gentleman in the whole place."

No one was surprised at this remark, seeing that Mr. Greening was always accustomed to judge others by himself.

"I say, old fellow," drawled out Mr. Samuel Luffey, addressing himself to his shadow, Mr. George Moffatt, "how many cigars did you smoke to-day."

"Nineteen," was the reply. "But I only began at half-past ten o'clock. I was drinking rum and milk in bed ever since eight; and I shouldn't have got up till two or so, only I had to kick a great fat chum down stairs, who came to ask for his five shillings."

"Do as I did the other day," exclaimed Mr. Twallop.

"What was that?" demanded Mr. Mopus.

"Why," answered Mr. Twallop, "a very sedate, sleek, oily little man was chummed upon me the other day, and demanded to be paid out.—'Oh! no,' says I, 'you're welcome to sleep here, if you like: this is your half of the room; and here's mine.'—'Very well,' says he; 'if I can't have the money, I must sleep here.'—So he brings in his mattress and bedding, and a couple of chairs, and prepared to make himself as cozy as possible. He takes his chop and pint of porter at two: at six he has his tea; at nine a bit of bread and cheese and another pint of beer; and at ten he goes to bed. Well—no sooner was the old chap asleep, than I got a key-bugle and a drum, and began kicking up such a noise as you never heard in your life. I had been drinking all day, and was pretty glorious, I can tell you. So the old chap awakes, and starts up in a terrible fright.—'I shall complain of this in the morning,' says he.—'Do and be d——d,' says I.—'You have no right to awaken me out of my slumbers,' he cries.—'You may do what you like in your half of the room,' said I; 'and I shall do as I choose in mine.'—'Yes, but you needn't play that horrid music,' says he.—'And you needn't snore so,' says I.—'This is provoking,' observes my chum after a moment's consideration.—'Very,' said I; and the key-bugle and drum made more noise than ever.—The poor fellow couldn't stand this at any

price ; so he was obliged to capitulate. He took a couple of shillings instead of five, and departed from my abode as soon as it was light."

"Well done, old boy," cried Mr. Skeffington, whom this exploit threw into actual convulsions of laughter and delight, although he had heard the same tale repeated over and over again a thousand times within the previous six or seven weeks. "Pass the jug this way."

"There's nothing more in it," observed Dr. Twoynton, looking very much surprised at a fact of which he ought to have been sensible when he drained the vessel of its last drop.

"And in the other," said Mr. Skeffington.

"Empty also," cried Mr. Mopus.

"And I've got no more gin," very quietly observed the founder of the feast. "Who has?"

Dr. Twoynton observed that he had neither gin nor money to purchase any : but this remark was quite unnecessary, inasmuch as every one present knew that if he had possessed the former, he would have drank it before he came, and that his actual possession of the latter was next to an impossibility. As no more spirits seemed to be forthcoming, Mr. Mopus proposed a cigar and a glass of half-and-half, with both of which he and those who were desirous of partaking of such luxuries, were immediately accommodated. Lord Bilkemorl suggested a game of *écarté*, and challenged Mr. Twill to be his antagonist; whereupon a very greasy pack of cards emanated from the depth of his lordship's pocket, and Mr. Twill accepted the challenge accordingly.

His lordship, to use his own figure of speech (for want of a better), was "most damnable cut;" but having certain reminiscences that the wants of the next day had no resources to be supplied from, he determined to play his best, or, in other words, cheat as much as he conveniently could, in order to make Mr. Twill pay master-general for future subsidies. With this laudable intention, the nobleman placed himself at a corner of the table, and Mr. Twill faced him.

The cards were shuffled and cut, and Lord Bilkemorl, having obtained the right to deal, dealt himself the King, and gained the point, Mr. Twill having an unaccountable number of small cards in his hand. But in a very short time Mr. Twill was under the painful anxiety of believing his own eyes, and satisfying himself that he was cheated. Annoyed at being the object of this nefarious transaction, he determined to allow his antagonist to pursue his own especial and peculiar line of conduct, in order that he might more effectually convict him of unfair play ; while Doctor Twoynton, in order to make the thing look better, wagered some very heavy sums on Mr. Twill's side with Mr. Twallop, who bet equally largely on the other. But it seems that these gentlemen had a little previous understanding together, by which it was arranged that their bets should be only nominal—as indeed they would have been without any such understanding at all, no money appearing on either side.

We do not mean to say that Dr. Twoynton precisely converted himself into a telegraph for the guidance and behoof of his friend Lord Bilkemorl: but this we may assert, that his lordship frequently watched the motions of the Doctor's fingers, and that the said fingers as frequently

indicated the number of trumps in Mr. Twill's hand. Coincidences, however, will happen; and this might have been one.

Game after game was won by Lord Bilkemorl, and half-crown after half-crown passed from Mr. Twill's pocket into that of his antagonist.

"I shall not take any advice now," very coolly observed Mr. Twill; "and therefore I shall allow no one to look over my hand."

Doctor Twoynton dared not remonstrate against this hint; he accordingly withdrew his chair to a distance, and sulkily discussed his half-and-half without offering to increase his losses to Mr. Twallop, or to stand a chance of retrieving them.

"Now then," said Mr. Twill, when he was conscious that his hand could no longer be overlooked; "let's double our stakes."

"Certainly," murmured Lord Bilkemorl, rather discomfited at being thus obliged to change the nature of his operations; "with much pleasure. Five shillings are the stake, then."

For some time Mr. Twill still continued to lose; but at length an opportunity of exposing the cheat which was being practised upon him, occurred. While Lord Bilkemorl, probably in a momentary fit of absence of mind, was endeavouring to conceal a King that it might serve for the next deal, the card fell to the ground, unperceived by any one save Mr. Twill. The game proceeded; the cards were dealt again, and a favourable moment arrived for Lord Bilkemorl to play the King he had attempted to hide, and thus secure the rubber. With all the cunning of a sharper, his lordship pretended to consider his hand, while he was in reality feeling for the card he required.

"I tell you what," said Mr. Twill, "I will go double or quits upon this game. We are each four."

"Done!" cried his lordship, placing all the half-crowns he had previously won upon the table, and counting them. "Two pound ten exactly."

Mr. Twill placed a five pound note upon the table—a circumstance which immediately roused Dr. Twoynton from his sulky fit and the discussion of his beer; for the doctor had only heard of such sums lately as five pounds, and did not actually believe that so great an amount could possibly belong to any one individual. But while the Doctor was lost in silent astonishment at so unexpected a display of wealth, the game proceeded.

"There," said Mr. Twill, throwing a card upon the table, "play to that."

His lordship felt for the King, and turned as pale as death when his eye caught a glimpse of his Majesty upon the floor. He could not acknowledge the deceit by stooping for it, and was therefore obliged to play another. The game was consequently lost to him, and Mr. Twill conveyed the recovered spoils back to his own pocket; while the coolness of that gentleman contrasted strongly with the crest-fallen appearance of Lord Bilkemorl.

Could the professed gambler once stand by and forget the proceedings of the game, so as dispassionately to contemplate only the various emotions betrayed by the countenances of those who are occupied in it, he might receive a lesson that would probably tend essentially to his benefit. There is an agony in the very gaze of the sharper, when he marks with

anxiety the different chances of the cards, or the varied throws of the dice. Whether he be successful or unfortunate, the contingencies of loss, and perhaps of consequent ruin, are perpetually before him: nor are the pleasures of taking up the plunder of his antagonist ample enough to recompense him for the dreadful moments that pass ere the event be decided. The constitution of man suffers by an over excitement of spirits, which in a moment may verge into despondency, and then be again as suddenly elevated by the return of fortune. Frequent potations are necessary to support the tidings of loss, and are deemed equally indispensable even when the gambler touches his winnings. In either case he requires liquor. This, with the late hours, the anxious watchings, the periods of varying bliss, despair, exultation,—in fine, dissipation and an irregular flow of spirits, rob him of many good years of his existence.

There must be an end to all things whose principles are connected with the elements of annihilation: and thus was it with the beer and the cigars. The clock had struck twelve, and some of the gentlemen proposed a walk in the racket-ground till two. This was generally assented to; but, before the guests took their departure, and probably with a view of doing ample justice to Mr. Skeffington's supper by not leaving an atom of it upon the table, they began to pelt their host and each other with the sandwiches which remained. It was in vain that Mr. Skeffington implored them to desist from their somewhat singular occupation. Mr. Twill made his escape at the commencement of the disturbance; and Mr. Skeffington's right eye was rendered temporarily useless by a blow which he received upon that optic from a stale roll thrown at him by the playful hand of Mr. Mopus. Doctor Twoynton emptied the remnants of the lobster salad upon the devoted head of Mr. Greening, and Mr. Twallop rubbed a tallow-candle through the hair of the Reverend Alfred Swiggle as he slept upon the floor. Mr. Luffey poured a jug of pure spring water upon his friend Mr. Moffatt, under the impression that such refreshment would be agreeable; and Lord Bilkemori terminated the entertainment by applying his foot to the table, and kicking it gently over to the entire discomfiture of candles, bottles, glasses, and all Mr. Skeffington's own or borrowed earthenware.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH THE READER IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH A VARIETY OF ADVENTURES THAT HAPPENED TO SOMERVILLE IN THE PURSUIT OF THE VENGEANCE HE THIRSTED FOR.

How sweet is freedom even after the captivity of a week! Whether arising from the bed of sickness, or from the portal of a goal, liberty—the liberty of breathing the fresh air of heaven, and of roaming miles and miles at will, without bar or shackle—is a luxury to be conceived only when thus experienced.

In spite of the all-absorbing nature of the oath, which the noble-minded Somerville had sworn to fulfil—in spite of his anxiety for the present, and his cares for the future—with a lovely wife dependant upon

him for support, and the providing of her daily bread, a duty incumbent upon himself,—despite of these reflections, the heart of Somerville expanded with joy, his eye glistened, and his lip wore a smile, as he once more threaded the streets of London, a freed man! A lodgings was speedily procured in the neighbourhood; and while Eliza arranged her little domestic matters at home, Somerville hastened to the bankers Stanley had indicated in his letter. As his enquiries were matters of private business, he was requested to step into an inner room adjoining the public office, where he was introduced to one of the partners of the firm.

"May I ask," said Somerville, after a proper apology for that which he modestly termed an intrusion, "whether you can inform me of the address of Mr. William Stanley?"

The banker referred to a book upon a desk at which he was sitting, and having examined a long list of nomenclatures, declared that no person bearing such a name kept an account at his house.

"The traitor!" cried Somerville: "then even his very offer of a quarterly allowance was a cheat!"

"Pray explain yourself, Sir," said the banker, "if you wish for any information which I can or may give you."

"A thousand pardons, Sir," exclaimed Somerville, restraining his indignation as much as possible: "but the treatment I have this day experienced at the hands of a Mr. Stanley in reference to an income to be paid through your house—though an income which I should have scorned to accept ____."

"Might I be allowed to solicit the favour of your name?" enquired the man of business, interrupting Somerville in the midst of his explanation.

"Frederick Somerville," was the answer.

"You are not deceived, then," resumed the banker. "I am directed to pay you one hundred pounds per quarter."

"And by whom are you thus directed?" asked Somerville, the idea that Stanley might have been a feigned name now striking him for the first time.

"*That* I am not at liberty to mention," was the reply.

"Oh! you know not, Sir, how much my happiness depends upon being made acquainted with this secret!" exclaimed Somerville with a vehemence which for a moment startled the banker.

"I regret, Sir—very much regret, that it is entirely out of my power to oblige you in this matter," said the man of business.

"Absolutely impossible?" demanded Somerville.

"Absolutely!" was the answer.

"Then from morning to night will I stand at the door of your bank," cried Somerville, in a species of rage which he could not control; "and I will watch every one who enters it. Oh! I know his description well—and shall not fail to detect him!"

"This violence, Sir, is unbecoming," said the man of business, sternly. "Address not your menaces to me: I only act according to the instructions I have received."

"Again I claim your pardon," ejaculated Somerville. "But, oh! Sir—you know not to what excesses, grief—disappointment—ruin—despair may carry a wretched man! You are not aware, Sir—oh! no,

you cannot be—how the sense of deep wrongs may cause the victim even to forget the common courtesies of life in the moment of his anguish ! No—Sir—you are ignorant of all this; or else you would pity, and not reproach me!"

There was something so earnestly pathetic and touching in the manners and accent of this strange young man, as he uttered these words, that the banker was both astonished and affected.

"Do you wish very much to communicate with *him* who has pensioned you?" enquired the banker, in a mild and conciliating tone of voice.

"Oh! yes—it is my life's most sanguine hope," said Somerville, hastily; and he seemed to await the banker's answer in a state of painful suspense and anxiety.

"Write to him," continued the banker, slowly; "and I will take care that the letter shall be forwarded—but upon one condition only."

"Name it—name your own terms," cried the young man, a ray of hope animating his pale countenance.

"That you do not put into force your menace of watching the entrance to the bank," was the immediate reply.

"Oh! I promise you most faithfully—and you may believe me," returned Somerville, "that I will comply with your wishes in this respect."

"Then, write," rejoined the banker; and he pointed to paper and other necessary materials which the desk furnished.

Somerville hastily expressed his gratitude to the worthy banker, and in obedience to the dictates of his own morbid feelings, penned the following laconic epistle :—

"Sir—Whatever be your real name, rank, or station, this will reach you. In the name of a deeply injured woman, I demand an opportunity of avenging her wrongs, or of becoming your victim in equal fight. If you be a man, direct your bankers to put me in possession of your address—or appoint a time and place for an interview: but, if you refuse, I will pursue you to the end of the world, and shall then treat you, not as the brave man treats his enemy, but as the assassin deals with his victim. Your proffered bounty I scorn and refuse.

"FREDERICK SOMERVILLE."

"When may I call for an answer?" enquired Somerville, as he folded and sealed the letter.

"Leave me your address," replied the banker, "and, if there be any answer, I will forward it to you. More I cannot do."

"And my eternal gratitude is due to you for this favour," said the young man, with tears in his eyes, as he respectfully took his leave of him to whom he considered himself to lie under a lasting obligation.

Various were the emotions which agitated the bosom of the young husband as he walked rapidly away from the bank; and so intently were his ideas fixed upon the probability of Stanley (for so must we continue to call the seducer of Eliza) replying to his letter, that he noticed not the thousands of busy and anxious countenances which past him. In the midst of the city, he seemed alone. And yet he was in the very heart of the bustle and noise of the English metropolis; he was proceeding from Lombard-street towards the Poultry. And unconsciously he past the rich merchant, the daring speculator, the prudent broker, the

griping capitalist, the reckless adventurer, the *millionaire*, and the indigent pauper—those characters so strangely commingled together on the vast stage of commercial life ;—and he marked not those whom he encountered, so deeply absorbed was he—this strange young man—in the contemplation of the anticipated sweets of revenge ! Where all hopes—all fears—all designs—and all energies were concentrated in one pursuit—the pursuit of wealth—a single soul, in that ever-changing crowd, was pondering on subjects but little connected with worldly fortunes. A single wave, in that living ocean, rolled onward to dash upon another shore than that which was sought by the myriads of surrounding undulations, and was agitated by a different gale from that which impelled its companions.

The young man had arrived in St. Paul's Church-yard, and there his ideas for a period wandered to another subject. He was just freed from a prison, and he gazed with pleasure upon the stupendous edifice which he had formerly passed a thousand times without particularly noticing it. He seemed to be proud of his right and his ability to wander at will in the mazes of this great city: and his heart leapt within him, when he remembered that he was no longer a prisoner. Then came the sudden conviction that he owed his liberty and his present happiness to one whose blood he only lived to shed.

A rude shock which he experienced in running against a passenger upon the same pavement, awoke him from his reverie. Somerville was about to apologise; but when he glanced towards the countenance of the individual of whom he had intended to ask pardon for his rudeness, he started—his tongue refused to give utterance to the words he would have said—and his limbs quivered with indescribable feelings. There—before him—stood the one whom he had wished to meet : he could not be mistaken—his wife had retained the portrait of her seducer, and Somerville had full often pondered over its features, that he might distinguish the original from every other being upon earth. No—it was not an illusion—it was he—Stanley—the villain, who had wronged his wife!

The stranger marked this sudden emotion, and wondered at the cause.

"I do not think I am known to you, Sir," said he, with a degree of hauteur which instantly recalled Somerville to himself.

"Yes—yes—I cannot be mistaken," murmured Somerville in a low tone of voice, as he caught the stranger by the wrist, which he squeezed with a maniac's vigour.

"Loose me, Sir," exclaimed the stranger: "we shall be observed. If you have aught to say to me, tell me your name, and I may probably hear you."

"Hear me," echoed Somerville, grinding his teeth with rage—"hear me ! Oh! yes—were you imbedded in a rock of adamant, you should hear me ! My name is ——"

"Is what?" cried the stranger impatiently. "This tragic performance in the open streets does not suit my temper nor my habits."

"My name!" ejaculated the young man, laughing bitterly. "My name ! You know it full well. It is Frederick Somerville!"

"Somerville!" exclaimed the stranger, starting slightly; then suddenly recovering his wonted equanimity, he added with the most imper-turbable coolness, "I know no one, Sir, by that name."

And he endeavoured to pass by Somerville and pursue his way.

"It is false—false as hell!" cried the now infuriate young man ; for the contemptuous coolness with which the stranger treated him, added to his unquenchable thirst for vengeance, had worked him up to a pitch of madness under the influence of which he was not master of himself.

"Let me pass," said the stranger, attempting to force himself away from the iron grasp of the young man who retained him.

"Never—till I have satisfaction," cried Somerville : and he seized hold of the stranger's collar with both hands.

The stranger's cheek waxed deadly pale, and his lip quivered.

"You will not loose me?" he said, in a low voice, and in a tone trembling with rage.

"No," was the stern reply.

The stranger seized the arms of Somerville with giant force, suddenly compelled him to loose his hold upon the collar of his coat, and then hurled him to the ground with all his strength. The feat was but the work of a single moment : Somerville fell heavily upon the pavement—a crowd was immediately collected around him—and the stranger succeeded in escaping from the spot.

Somerville had fallen against the kerb-stone of the pavement, and his temple bled profusely. He was raised by one of the individuals who had collected around him, and water was fetched by another from a neighbouring shop to recover him. But it was necessary to staunch the blood that flowed from his wound : and the man, who supported him in his arms, made but an indifferent nurse.

Suddenly a young girl, of about seventeen years of age, left the arm of an old man with whom she had been attracted to the spot, and threading her way like a graceful fairy through the crowd, hastened to administer to the wounded youth that succour which woman only knows how to offer. Without exhibiting the slightest timidity in consequence of the numbers that were gazing upon her, yet with the modest blush of virgin innocence mantling upon her chaste brow, the young girl examined the wound, parted the dark locks of Somerville over his forehead, and then proceeded to bathe his temple with a clean white handkerchief which she held in her hand. And she actually knelt upon the pavement as she thus ministered to the comforts of a fellow-creature !

It was a most interesting scene—that young girl, with all the kindness of a sister, bending over a wounded stranger—an individual whom she had never seen before—and whom she would probably never meet again. The graces of her form were enhanced by the nature of her occupation ; and the natural loveliness of her countenance was increased a thousand-fold by the expression of anxiety, and charitable tenderness which the scene before her had created. Her fine blue eyes, with their long dark lashes, were bent upon the face of the patient ; her red lips apart, disclosed a set of even and white teeth ; and her ringlets occasionally mingled with the black locks of him whom she tended.

Her garb alone indicated the walk of life to which she belonged : otherwise, the unembarrassed gracefulness of her form and the noble expression of her features would have stamped her as a companion for the highest ladies in the land. Her attire was humble, but neat and



Grace Darlings
Attention to Young Somerville.

tastefully selected; and those, who gazed upon her, although her superiors according to the social customs of these times, would have been rather inclined to treat her as an equal than as an inferior.

Her companion was a venerable man, on whose brow the toils rather than the cares of life had planted premature wrinkles. He was dressed in homely garments; but there was an air of cleanliness and respectability about him which suited well with the demeanour of her, whom a family resemblance instantly denoted to be his daughter.

The young girl bathed the wound of the prostrate youth, and staunched the blood. She then tore her clean white handkerchief into pieces and formed a proper bandage which she bound round his temples. So soon as this last effort of the most sublime charity was performed, Somerville opened his eyes and gazed wildly around him.

"Where am I?" said he, glancing timidly up into the amiable countenance which bent over him.

"You have met with an accident—but it will be nothing," replied the young girl in the most melodious tone of voice that ever fell upon a sick man's ear.

In a few moments Somerville collected his scattered ideas, and comprehended his position.

The fair nurse beckoned her father to approach, and whispered something in his ear. The old man summoned a hackney-coach; and with the assistance of himself and one or two of the spectators of all that had passed, Somerville was lifted into the vehicle.

"Where do you reside?" enquired the old man.

Somerville who had now recovered himself so far as to sit up with ease in the coach and to dissipate any fear relative to a relapse, mentioned his address. The old man drew the driver aside, intimated the direction in which he was to conduct the invalid, and paid the fare.

"Farewell," said the old man, returning to the carriage window, and shaking hands with Somerville: "in a day or two you will be quite well."

"And pray, might I ask," said Somerville, "if you be connected with the young person to whom I am under so deep an obligation?"

"She is my daughter, Sir," was the reply: "and has only done that which hundreds of others would have rejoiced to do in her situation."

"And yet there were perhaps other females older than her upon the spot," suggested Somerville, still retaining the old man's hand.

"She stands aloof to avoid being thanked for this paltry act of charity," returned the old man; "and I—who meddled but little with it—claim no thanks myself."

"At least let me know the name of my kind nurse," persisted Somerville; "so that on a future occasion I may tell the tale of her exemplary conduct to those whom the lesson may benefit."

"We live far away—and you will probably never see nor hear of us again," returned the old man, with drawing his hand from the warm grasp which had retained it.

"I conjure you—tell me her name," reiterated Somerville.

"Grace Darling," replied the old man; and he hastened to join his daughter who stood at a little distance, while the coach drove rapidly away from the spot where the accident had occurred.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE READER IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THE CONTINUATION
OF THE ADVENTURES OF MR. SLAPMAN TWILL.

ON the morning which succeeded the splendid supper in the chamber of the very eminent Mr. Skeffington, Mr. Twill awoke with rather a parched mouth and an aching head. We know not whether the effects of the gin-punch or the excitement of the evening may have produced this effect: but certain it is, that it was felt; and that is enough.

A morning in the Bench is too peculiar to be passed over without due notice. At eight o'clock the gates are unlocked, and inward rolls a tide of domestics, char-women, lacqueys, itinerant venders of divers provisions, and dependants of the prisoners, whose business is more or less connected with the gaol. The several masters of the racket-ground turn out and water their respective localities: the newsman rushes into the Tap to secure the papers which his boy has brought him in; the denizens of the State House range themselves against the wall of that building, to await the call of their servants to breakfast; (and if they have no servants, they obey the still more peremptory summons of their appetites;) and the tall stout gentleman, with his stick and two little children, takes a pleasant and quiet walk on the parade ground with the lawyer who carries the skirts of his ragged dressing-gown over his right arm.

Then the cries commence;—not cries of woe and suffering; but cries of “New Laid Eggs!”—“Water-Cresses!”—“Milk!”—&c., &c.; and then does the active man rise from his couch, as the midnight reveller turns into it. The hair-dresser of Number 3 Stair-case, who rejoices in the *cognomen* of Walker, limps to the Tap to steady his hand for shaving with a pint of half-and-half; and the accomplished Mr. George Moffatt smokes his first cigar upon the steps of the State House, while Mr. Luffey sleeps off the orgies of the previous night.

With what anxiety is the hour of ten looked forward to by many of the half-famished prisoners; for at that auspicious time the little list of candidates for General Post letters is affixed to the window of the Post Office. The char-woman, who has been taught an useful lesson of patience by being recommended to wait for her wages, hies to the Post Office to see if there be a letter for her master; and quickly, and full of hope, as she has tripped thither, slowly and mournfully does she return to him who sent her, with the news that “there is nothing for him.” And as she wends her way back again to her master, she considers within herself whether she shall be answerable for the loaf she is about to procure him upon credit; or whether she shall at once divest herself of a bad bargain and farther encumbrance on his account. And then her overpowering good-nature gains the victory; and she hastens to his room with a smile upon her countenance, and a loaf in her hand. Perhaps the prisoner, whose fate as to a meal had only a moment before been weighed in the scales of credit or distrust by this woman, is a man of family, with children applying to him for subsistence;—perhaps he has a wife, whose

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"Mr. Gulliver's interview with John Hummore Esq.²

energies are sinking beneath the accumulations of want and privation ;— perhaps he knows that the day must inevitably come when he must as inevitably want a mouthful of bread ! Then, with what bitterness does he partake of the loaf which charity and a relic of confidence have for the moment provided : then, what emotions must fill his breast, as he receives from the hand of poverty all that poverty can give !

At about ten o'clock, the inside watchmen of the prison having made their report for the previous night, a variety of young gentlemen are summoned to the upper lobby to appear before a certain Mr. Gloster, who, without any real authority, takes upon himself the adjudication of all matters in the absence of the Marshal. This Mr. Gloster is a mean-looking, vulgar fellow, with no manners, or, rather very bad ones, and with a degree of impudence which would put a brass warming-pan to shame. He practises as an attorney when he can get anything to practise with, or any one to practise upon ; but woe to the unhappy wretch who shall find himself in his power ; for, even if he have nothing, shall be taken away from him the little which he hath.

Upon these occasions, either Mr. George Moffatt or Mr. Samuel Lufey is sure to figure ; and perhaps the seclusion of the strong room is recommended for a few hours or so. Lord Bilkemorl (when there) was one of the most noisy and riotous people in the Bench : but he was never punished, because he was a lord in the first place ; and in the second, he paid Mr. Gloster a weekly bribe which rendered his person safe from all molestation.

But we must not weary the reader with description. Mr. Twill arose at an early hour, and hastened to the parade-ground to take a little stroll in order to acquire an appetite for breakfast. The different play-yards were as yet unoccupied ; and so he enjoyed the full scope of the whole arena, the sameness of which is varied by three pumps in the middle, and the distant view of the little market at the end of the building.

Mr. Twill was wrapt up in his dressing-gown and in a deep contemplation at the same time ; and as he walked up and down, he did not notice that another individual, habited in a suit of fustian, with a straw hat upon his head, had sought the same promenade. But at every turn which the gentleman in fustian took upon the racket-ground, he so curtailed his walk, that in a few minutes he was nearly abreast with Mr. Twill.

"Hem ! hem !" said the gentleman in fustian, suddenly seized with a violent fit of coughing as he drew near to Mr. Twill, whose acquaintance he was evidently very desirous to make : "hem ! hem !"

But Mr. Twill did not notice the fustian-clad gentleman ; and so the violence of the cough redoubled. The stratagem, however, failed to work the desired effect ; the stranger therefore determined upon resorting to more direct means of introducing himself to Mr. Twill.

"A fine morning, Sir," said he, slightly raising the straw hat from his head, kicking his left leg behind him to complete the salutation, and accosting Mr. Twill with a true King's Bench familiarity of manner.

"Yes—but I think we shall have some rain," returned the gentleman thus addressed, without really thinking anything at all upon the subject.

"I am afraid so," continued the other. "But you are a new-comer, I suppose?" and the straw hat was again gently raised from a very thick

head—or rather (we beg the gentleman's pardon) from a head of very thick black hair.

Mr. Twill replied in the affirmative; and a cursory glance which he gave at the outward man of his companion, showed him that that individual was somewhat stout in person, and florid in complexion, with large whiskers meeting under his chin, a wide mouth, and very white teeth. His age might have been about forty; but dissipation had planted an untimely wrinkle beneath the eyes.

"Ah! it's a terrible place to be in;" said this person, after a pause. "I've vegetated here for nearly three years now, and have no chance of getting out. But then my debts are large—a million and a half, my boy! That's the go, ain't it?"

It was indeed; for the stranger, doubtless with a view of impressing the fact upon Mr. Twill's mind, applied a violent slap to that gentleman's back, and then gave a loud laugh which echoed all over the prison.

"Yes—yes," continued he; "every one has heard of me and my misfortunes. Little Johnny Plummbers is a man too well known for you not to have heard of him. Plummbers—that's my name. What's your's?"

Mr. Twill handed his card to Mr. Plummbers, who read it once or twice over, and then consigned it to his waistcoat pocket.

"Twill—Slapman Twill," mused Mr. Plummbers. "Well—that's a very good name. But it ain't so good as John Plummbers, Esquire, of Tivey Nevitt Hall, Yorkshire. Why, Sir—my father was private tutor to the present King of Greece; and I've got ten thousand acres of olive-lands in that country."

"Indeed," said Mr. Twill, casting a somewhat incredulous look at his companion.

"Oh! yes—I've estates all over the world," proceeded Mr. Plummbers: "but the one in America is quite useless on account of the rattle-snakes which infest it; and the pasturage on the banks of the Nile—there's seven thousand acres there—swarms with crocodiles to such an extent that I don't dare ask a labourer to go upon it. My finest property is in one of the oases of the Great Desart; but you die of thirst before you get there, and consequently those resources are also cut off."

"Pray, are you a land-owner in the Moon or any of those distant territories?" enquired Mr. Twill, with something like an ironical smile upon his lip.

"No—not exactly," returned Mr. Plummbers, quite seriously; "although I have invented an *apparatus* to convey myself to any one of the planets in our immediate vicinity."

"Do you not think such an *apparatus* would be well employed in escaping over this wall some fine night?" asked Mr. Twill.

"The fact is it won't go short distances," rejoined Mr. Plummbers; "or else it would be very useful. But I suppose you know why they keep me in prison?"

"I really do not," said Mr. Slapman Twill.

"Why," continued Mr. John Plummbers, "because I should turn the Whigs out of office, and send Mr. O'Connell to Botany Bay, if I was only free for one half hour. I don't stand any nonsense, I can tell you."

Mr. Twill thought that he however talked a great deal; but he did

not express his opinion. A pause of some minutes in the conversation ensued.

"I say," exclaimed Mr. Plummers, suddenly turning round towards his companion, "come up to my room this evening, and I'll tell you all about myself. I'll give you the history of my life. Will you come?"

There was something so singular in the manner of this individual, that Mr. Twill was induced by the curiosity he felt to know more of him, to accept the invitation. Mr. Plummers was overjoyed at the prospect of having a guest; and wishing Mr. Twill a good morning, he hastened to his own room to enjoy the breakfast for which his walk had given him no inconsiderable appetite.

"Do you know who that is you have been talking to, old fellow?" enquired Mr. Samuel Luffey, he accosted Mr. Twill, who was returning from the racket-ground to the vicinity of the Coffee-house.

"No," said Mr. Twill; and it struck him, as he gazed upon Mr. Luffey's unkempt hair, that a little more frequent recourse to the barber would not have been amiss.

"Why, he's the most extraordinary fellow in the whole place," returned Mr. Luffey; "and as for lies—Gad! won't he pitch it you strong?"

"Well, I shall judge for myself," observed Mr. Twill. "His character savours of the eccentric."

And having given utterance to this very sublime idea, Mr. Twill wiped his face with a radiant silk handkerchief, which had been copiously scented with White's admirable Essence of Eglantine, and hastened to the Coffee-house to partake of the breakfast, for which he had acquired an excellent appetite.

Now Mr. Twill had scarcely imbibed a cup of coffee and eaten a single egg, when Mr. Wusted made his appearance.

"Lady and lady's-maid a-waiting down-stairs to see you, Sir," said Mr. Wusted.

"God bless me!" cried Mr. Twill; "that can't be—no—it can't—it's impossible!"

"No, it ain't at all impossible," interrupted Mr. Wusted. "There she be as large as life—and preshus big that is too."

"Dear me—how d—d provoking!" mused Mr. Twill. "But pray ask her to step up, Mr. Wusted."

"If the stairs is wide enow," said the Coffee-house keeper, departing to execute the commission with which he was charged.

In a few minutes a stout lady, bedecked in garments of all possible colours, and ornamented with an entire jeweller's shop, dragged herself into the private room which it will be recollectcd Mr. Twill had hired on the departure of Somerville and his wife. She was followed by a very pretty servant-girl, who occupied the lucrative though somewhat onerous places of lady's-maid and lap-dog bearer to the stout gentlewoman. Their respective ages might be about nineteen and forty-five: that of the dog, which the servant carried in her arms, has not been satisfactorily ascertained.

"Oh! that horrid ladder!" exclaimed the stout lady, sinking into a chair, with the most melancholy expression that ever was seen upon

a fat countenance: "I raly did think I never should have clambered up it. Penelope, my girl."

"Yes, ma'am," said the lady's lady.

"My smelling-bottle, dear—do make haste, for I am *so* flurried," with difficulty articulated the old personage.

"Which, ma'am?" demanded the abigail: "the camphor or the common salts?"

"I think I'd rayther have the salts, Penelope," was the answer; and when the old lady had duly snuffed at one bottle, and declared it was not the right one, and then snuffed at the other, Mr. Slapman Twill, who had as yet remained a silent spectator of all that was taking place, and who appeared to be perfectly well acquainted with the humour of his visitor, ventured to break silence.

"Really, my dear Mrs. Wokensmithers," said Mr. Twill, in as amiable a tone of voice as he could assume, "this is very kind of you. But how came you to know that I was here?"

"O Slapman, Slapman!" cried Mrs. Wokensmithers, "I never *did* think it would have come to this. Penelope, dear—my *eau-de-cologne*."

"Pray, don't take on so, ma'am," urged the young lady, casting a sly glance towards Mr. Twill, and then blushing deeply, because she saw that he had noticed her little manoeuvre.

"And when do you really think you'll quit this odorous prison?" enquired Mrs. Wokensmithers, after another relapse and another partial recovery.

"To-morrow or next day, my angel," returned Mr. Twill. "But pray answer my query: how came you to know that I was here?"

"Why, by some accident," explained Mrs. Wokensmithers, "a certain Mr. Snatch—I raly don't know who or what he is—called upon Mr. Snifflesteak, my butcher, and asked him to become bail or security for a certain Mr. Twill."

"The dolt!" exclaimed Mr. Twill. "But, tell me, dear Angiolina—I hope I have not forfeited—that is, lost—I mean to say, fallen in your opinion at all—"

"Oh! dear, dear!" cried the very sensitive widow, again having recourse to her smelling bottles; "how can you be so cruel. I'm sure the late Mr. Wokensmithers would not have made such a hobservation as that!"—and hereupon Mrs. Wokensmithers thought it necessary to conjure up a few tears.

Mr. Twill was affected—or pretended to be so: he accordingly applied his radiant handkerchief to his eyes, fell at the feet of the stout widow, and poured forth his soul in protestations of eternal gratitude and love. This need not be wondered at: the relict of the late Mr. Woken-smithers had three thousand *per annum*.

"There—there now, my dear boy," said the widow, "don't fret yourself. I admire your delicacy in not making me acquainted with your position; and I have ordered Snifflesteak and Neadby, my baker, to become security for you. In this way, we may make arrangements with your heartless creditor."

"My dearest Angiolina," began Mr. Twill, "I—"

"There, there—there's enough of gratitude, my dear Slapman,"

interrupted the kind widow ; and sinking her voice, she added, " For I have your love—and that is more than gratitude."

Mr. Twill pressed the exceedingly fat hand of the widow to his heart, and sighed audibly.

" Now, Pen, my dear," continued Mrs. Wokensmithers, addressing herself to the lady's-maid ; " produce all the little comforts we have brought for Mr. Twill."

Miss Penelope, in obedience to the orders of her mistress, took a small basket from beneath her cloak, placed the lap-dog upon a chair, and hastened to unload the contents of the said basket upon the table.

" There's a pound of Howqua's best mixture," said she ; " and here's some of the whitest sugar I could get. This is cayenne—them's pickles—that there's a pot of currant jelly—this is damson cheese—here's a pot of aperient pills—the bottle contains catchup—that jar is olives—and here's a pound of the best arrowroot."

" Upon my word, you are too good," said Mr. Twill to his intended, as he surveyed, with a somewhat singular expression of countenance, the aforesaid articles. " But how long, then, do you suppose I am going to remain here ?"

" O Lord !" cried the widow, with a very great inclination to relapse into the dismals once more, " at least four or five days longer, according to what Mr. Snatch says. But pray keep up your spirits, Slapman, for my sake !"

Had not Mr. Twill intended to do this for his own sake, he certainly could not have refused to exert himself in favour of a lady ; so he did not hesitate to assure Mrs. Wokensmithers that such was his intention.

" Oh ! I've such a lot to tell you, my dear boy," said Mrs. Wokensmithers, after a short pause ; " such news, indeed. The kitchen chimney blew down last night !"

" No !" ejaculated Mr. Twill, retreating a few paces as if in the deepest horror and alarm.

" Yes," proceeded the widow, with a sigh ; " and such a catastrophe never was before !"

" Any one killed ?" enquired Mr. Twill, in the most breathless suspense.

" Seven of them !" murmured Mrs. Wokensmithers, scarcely able to conquer her emotions.

" Indeed !" cried the young lover. " I'm exceedingly sorry to hear such bad news."

" Yes—seven of the loveliest—nicest—prettiest little kittens you'd ever wish to see in a summer's day !" resumed the widow.

" Oh ! they wern't grown up ——"

" Grown up, no—quite young ones," interrupted Mrs. Wokensmithers. " The more's the pity."

" Grown up persons, I meant, ma'am," explained Mr. Twill.

" Oh ! no—cats," cried Mrs. Wokensmithers. " But that wasn't all—the poor little innocents ! Some thieves broke into the larder, and stole ——"

" Not the plate, I hope," ejaculated Mr. Twill, who probably had an eye to that useful little portion of a decent establishment.

" No—not the plate—but a large pigeon-pie and a ham," returned the

widow, whose spirits once more threatened to sink under the reminiscence of this accumulated load of misfortunes; but Penelope was near, and so the relapse was not fatal.

"Is it generally known that I am here?" enquired Mr. Twill, probably with a view of changing the conversation.

"Oh! dear me—no," answered the widow. "I wouldn't have it known for the world, particularly after that little paragraph in the *Morning Post* which—which—you know what I mean;" and Mrs. Wokensmithers blushed with all the modesty of a young creature of fifteen.

"Yes—yes—I know," said Mr. Twill, slyly. "The hymeneal altar—shortly expected—wealthy relict—Honourable member of a noble family—oh! I know what you allude to!"

"Was there ever such a man?" said the widow, with a smile of evident gratification at Mr. Twill's facetiousness. "But—no, I can assure you that as yet the thing is a perfect secret. For my part, I only mentioned it—it was in the height of my affliction, when I first heard of it—to Lady Torkletung; and I know she merely whispered it, in her sorrow—poor dear good creature! to Miss Chatturbocks. So it couldn't go any farther, you see."

Mr. Twill did not, however, see this at all—or else he was so obstinate, he would not do so; but perhaps he thought that the matter was not quite so much a secret as the widow imagined—an inference he might have been induced to draw from the fact of Miss Penelope declaring that, for her part, she had only mentioned it to the butler and housemaid, and could rely upon their honour. He, nevertheless, held his peace; for he did not deem it politic to quarrel with a widow in the possession of three thousand a year.

At length Mrs. Wokensmithers rose, after a great many efforts to depart; and having exacted a promise from Mr. Twill to call upon her the very first thing after his liberation, and having implored him not to give way to low spirits or company—both of which she abhorred—the excellent lady took her leave and her departure, followed by Penelope, whose rosy lips Mr. Twill most gallantly kissed as her mistress turned the angle of those stairs which she had not unaptly denominated a ladder.

CHAPTER X.

MR. SLAPMAN TWILL DISCOVERS THAT LITERARY PURSUITS ARE ANY THING BUT NEGLECTED WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE KING'S BENCH.—HE MEETS WITH THE PROPRIETOR OF A NEW JOURNAL.

WHEN Mrs. Wokensmithers and her lady's maid had eased Mr. Twill of their presence, that gentleman first relieved his feelings by a very loud and long laugh, and then addressed himself with renewed vigour to his breakfast. So soon as this meal was concluded, he swept the various little articles the kind widow had brought him, into an empty cupboard which stood in one corner of the room; and having thus ungraciously disposed of the aperient pills, the cayenne, &c., he exchanged his dress-

ing-gown for a coat, and descended to the open space opposite the State-House to lounge away an hour or so in doing nothing.

As he passed by the watch-box in which the miserable pauper stands to solicit alms, a large posting-bill, that was stuck against one side of it, attracted his attention, as indeed it had already done that of half the gentlemen and all the blackguards in the place. The announcement, which the aforesaid poster made to the public, was to the effect that a newspaper, bearing the incendiary title of *The Flambeau*, and conducted by the most eminent literary men of the day, had that morning issued from the press and was on sale at every newspaper-agent's in the United Kingdom. A little *post scriptum* informed all readers that this highly respectable journal might be procured of "Mr. Hutchinson, publisher, bookseller, and news-agent, First Table on the left hand going in, Tap, King's Bench."

With a smile upon his lip and twopence in his hand, did Mr. Twill repair to the Tap, and there purchase one of the *Flambeaux* thus pompously announced: he then retired to the steps of the State House, where he set himself busily at work to peruse the print he had so rashly disbursed a large sum to obtain. But in the midst of his occupation he was interrupted by an individual, who was attired in a green frock coat, dark trousers, shoes and white stockings, and a black neckcloth tied very loosely round a high white collar, and who addressed him as follows:—

"Got the *Flambeau*, I see, Sir."

"Yes—I was just casting an eye over it," carelessly remarked Mr. Twill, as he turned the paper backwards and forwards in his hands, with that sort of distaste which a person generally feels for a very dry print.

"Tremendous sensation that paper has caused, surely," continued the green-surtout coated gentleman, who was delighted to call himself by the truly distinguished and by no means common name of Sillyman: "three and twenty copies went off at the publisher's within the first half hour."

"Indeed," said Mr. Twill. "Then you are acquainted with the proprietors, I presume."

"Yes, Sir," returned Mr. Sillyman: "I rather think I am, Sir. I am the proprietor, Sir—the sole proprietor, Sir; and it is my money which started that admirable journal."

Mr. Twill did recollect an old proverb which intimates that a certain description of men and their money are soon parted: but he thought it prudent not to express his opinion in a hurry. He therefore declared that he was greatly pleased with having formed the acquaintance of a proprietor of a journal; at which compliment Mr. Sillyman tried to look as pleased as he could, but failing so to do, he only looked immoderately foolish; and Mr. Twill continued his perusal of the leading article.

"Are you reading under the head of *Flambeau*, Sir?" enquired Mr. Sillyman, after a moment's pause.

"Yes," returned Mr. Twill; "and I was just thinking that your editor must be a prisoner himself."

"So he is—so he is," said Mr. Sillyman, applying a very dirty forefinger to an exceedingly ill-shaped nose, with an air of most awe-inspiring mystery. "But, pray turn the leaf, and read the article entitled *Swiggle versus Diggle, or the American Banking System, considered in*

reference to trans-Atlantic constitutions, and with regard to the views of young Republicans."

"I am sorry to say that I am no financier," observed Mr. Twill, "and am afraid that your elucidations would be thrown away upon me."

"Nor I either," returned Mr. Sillyman: "but, the fact is, we journalists—we, in fine, who are connected with the press—do not think it necessary to understand a subject before we write upon it. Indeed, it is my intention to explain many matters in this paper which, between ourselves, I scarcely comprehend even the very basis of myself."

"That will be one way to ensure the success of the paper," suggested Mr. Twill.

Posterity will never know what might have been Mr. Charles Sillyman's reply; because just as Mr. Charles Sillyman was about to give one, a boy, covered with mud about his small clothes and perspiration about his face, rushed into the prison, and informed Mr. Sillyman that he had been sent all the way down from Catherine Street in the Strand, to say that the *Flambeau* was going off like wild-fire, and that fifty-seven copies were already sold. The boy moreover added, that he had left a man bargaining for a fifty-eighth, and should not be at all surprised to find that he had purchased it on his return to the office.

This news produced such an effect upon Mr. Charles Sillyman, that, as he has since declared, the sudden excitement would have been too much for him, had he not had the presence of mind to rush to the Tap and disburse the produce of two *Flambeaux* upon a pot of porter, which he drank then and there. He next bestowed a halfpenny upon the boy who had made him thus happy; and, having despatched the youth back again to Catherine Street, to attend to the germinating interests of his paper, he hastened to communicate his felicity and its cause to Mr. Twill.

"Ah! what do you think of that review of Snooks's new book?" enquired Mr. Sillyman, as he glanced his eye over the column which Mr. Slapman Twill appeared to be reading. "Devilish severe, ain't it?"

"Very," coincided Mr. Twill.

"Just run your eye over that sentence again," said Mr. Sillyman; and indicating a certain paragraph with his finger, he read it aloud for the behoof of himself and Mr. Twill. "'Never in the course of our literary experience—never since we first plucked a feather from the airy wing of the volatile Pegasus—never, during that period which we have proudly, and we may say, usefully devoted ourselves to the pursuits of learning—never have we perused such an abortion as the work which Snooks has just issued to the world. Snooks, it will be remembered, is the individual who involved himself so foolishly and so rashly in the well-known Gammon and Spinach controversy, and who has now contrived to get himself shown up for his false premises in the *Firebrand* and the *Flambeau*.—He won't like that, I should rather think!"' observed Mr. Charles Sillyman, with the glow of pride and satisfaction which a clever man may assume, when he had brought this paragraph to a conclusion.

"Gad! I should think not," exclaimed Mr. Twill. "But isn't it rather singular, a paper issuing from a prison?"

"Oh! everybody does not know that," explained Mr. Sillyman. "Besides I have my Editor, and my Reporter for the Theatres, and my

Publisher, and my men with placards, and my Collecting Clerk for the advertisements. It is a famous establishment, I can tell you."

"Ah! I understand," said Mr. Twill; "you find the money, eh?"

"Precisely," returned Mr. Sillyman, who did not notice the satirical smile which curled the lips of Mr. Slapman Twill as he made the above observation.

"And here," resumed Mr. Sillyman, as he pointed to another part of the paper; "what do you think of this Universal Dedication? Rather spicy, ain't it?"

Mr. Twill cast his eyes towards the paragraph thus alluded to, and perused, with the most unfeigned delight, the following highly edifying lines:—

"O whosoe'er these presents may concern,
Now learn,
That to the world at large—to all the earth,
To men of sorrow, and to those of mirth,—
 To great and small,
 Of nations all,
Whether their skins be tawny, black, or white,—
In climes of darkness, or in realms of light,—
 Whate'er their state,
Whether their names be Simpson, Styles, or Sambo—
We hereby dedicate
 This FLAMBEAU!"

"That's my own composition," whispered Mr. Sillyman, with an expression of triumph upon his very peculiarly stupid countenance. "The idea's a good one, is it not?"

"Excellent!" cried Mr. Twill. "But—I say—what's the meaning of this? Here's some mistake."

"Where?" exclaimed Mr. Sillyman, his whole frame suddenly shaking with anxiety and alarm.

"See how queer this reads," continued Mr. Twill. "'When the rays of the morning sun burst the adamantine bars of dreary night —'"

"Well! that's all right," interrupted Mr. Sillyman. "I wrote that article also. Don't you think it a very fine beginning for a tale entitled *The Fatal Catastrophe?*"

"Wait a moment," said Mr. Twill; and he continued to read as follows. "'When the rays of the morning sun burst the adamantine bars of dreary night, and dispelled the sombre shades of noisome darkness—and when the enamoured Thetis emancipated her radiant lover from her sea-girding arms —'"

"That's Phœbus, you know," again interrupted Mr. Sillyman. "I think it's plain enough."

"'And when the enamoured Thetis emancipated her radiant lover from her sea-girding arms,'" continued Mr. Twill, "'a costermonger's donkey was swept by the hurricane from the summit of the rock —'"

"The devil!" ejaculated Mr. Sillyman, as if he had been suddenly stung by a scorpion: "why, this is a transposition—an error of the maker-up. He has blended a piece of the *Dreadful Hurricane at Scarborough* with the *Fatal Catastrophe!*"

"He has indeed," coolly remarked Mr. Twill; "and a pretty effect the blunder produces."

But Mr. Sillyman heard not this unfeeling remark: he was already half-way up the State House stairs, to write a letter to his printer to complain of the terrible mistake which had thus spoilt a most affecting and pathetic tale. But there were no means of rectifying the error save through the usual method of an *Erratum* in the second Number; and, accordingly, in the following week, a short Notice to Correspondents restored the Costermonger's donkey to his right place, and introduced the heroine of the tale to the reader instead of the aforesaid animal, whose presence could not be deemed a very interesting substitute.

Scarcely had Mr. Charles Sillyman left Mr. Twill alone on the steps of the State House, when this latter gentleman was accosted by another prisoner, whose only motive for introducing himself to the new-comer was evidently limited to the pleasure of chattering half an hour with an individual who had so lately been outside. This other prisoner, to whom we allude, was a short, stout, old man, with a dark complexion, an exceedingly shabby suit of clothes, and a strange waddle in his walk. But his countenance was expressive of a degree of good-nature which even the iron hand of captivity had not been able to efface; and his manners, if not actually gentlemanly, were quiet and unassuming. His name was Radley; and he had been an inmate of the Bench for many—many years.

"You feel the time hang heavily upon your hands," said he to Mr. Twill, after some of that desultory conversation which usually commences an acquaintance; "but were you to reside any length of time in this place, you would find an occupation even in doing nothing. I mean that the time would pass as rapidly away, while standing for hours on these steps, or lounging on that bench opposite, as if you were amused with books or other sources of pleasure."

"I can readily fancy," observed Mr. Twill, "that habit and long use may convert even idleness into something bordering upon a means of passing away time agreeably: but I am afraid that the apprenticeship must be long and wearisome."

"You are right—you are right," returned Mr. Radley hastily. "Now, look at that very tall, stout, fine-looking man, with a stick in his hand. He stands for hours during the day at this door, watching his two little children playing about him; and, God knows! each day telleth another, so far as he is concerned. That stout gentleman, with whom he is now walking, is a captain in the army: he amuses himself in making little furnaces to melt gold and silver upon improved plans! Strange, but innocent amusement—a care for the very metals, the lack of which has placed him here!"

"And you yourself," said Mr. Twill. "How do you endeavour to pass away the time?"

"The history of those two gentlemen," returned Mr. Radley, "is mine in its principal parts—is that of nearly every one, whose hours are not devoted to dissipation—and will become your's, if you stay here long enough to admit the appropriation. One autobiography in this place, will serve for very many men."

There was something so strange, and yet so true—so sad, and yet so

striking, in the words of him with whom Mr. Twill was conversing, that he felt his blood run chill within him, and his spirits were suddenly depressed. For the first time it struck him that he was in a living tomb —one of the inhabitants of a mausoleum whose tenants were shut out from the world, and numbered with the dead. And he was unhappy; but he was also desirous of persuading himself that his companion had materially overdrawn the picture.

"I cannot believe," said he, after a long pause, "that you really mean me to credit all you say, to its full extent. Pardon me, if I be sceptical—but—"

"Sceptical!" interrupted the old man, with a species of laughter which seemed to testify to the truth of his assertions: "sceptical about the misery of this place? Well—it may be so: you doubt, because you have not seen it. Come with me, and be convinced at once. The sight of human sorrow may be disagreeable; but for a young man like you the lesson is a necessary, and may be a salutary one."

And with these words, the old man seized his astonished hearer by the arm, and conducted him to the back of the prison, to the department which is called the Poor Side.

"I only heard of this case of distress an hour or so ago," observed Radley, as he led the way up one of the narrow and dirty stone staircases to the top storey of the prison: "but I believe it is a very bad business."

He knocked at a door as he uttered these words, and a low—faint voice desired him to enter. He obeyed the summons, closely followed by Mr. Twill.

To give an accurate description of the scene which met the eyes of the two visitors to that abode of misery, would baffle every pen, however graphic its powers of description. The naked walls were dirty and discoloured; the floor was a mass of filth. And upon that floor was a single mattress—a thin, old mattress; and on the mattress was stretched the emaciated form of a dying man, whose shivering limbs were scarcely covered by a piece of blanket which he endeavoured to wrap round him. He had no sheets—and his aching head had no pillow. Not a spark of fire cheered the miserable creature with its necessary heat, for he had neither wood nor coals.

And over him leant a pale, sickly, wan-looking female, who was essaying to persuade him to drink a cup of milk which she held in her hand. But on the foot of the mattress sate a little boy of about three years of age; and the still fond father beckoned the attentive wife to soothe the hunger and the suffering of the poor infant with the cup of milk. And he, poor man! so much wanted that small—that sorry cup of milk! But parental affection prevailed over dissolving nature even in the hour of starvation and despair.

"Good God! is it possible?" cried Mr. Twill, as this terrible picture of human woe broke upon his sight; and he exchanged significant glances with him who had been his guide.

"What! have they come to take even this sorry mattress now?" enquired the dying man in a faint and hollow voice, which rattled in his throat.

"Haste, my good woman," exclaimed Mr. Twill, throwing money upon the bed; "a surgeon—and food—and fire—or it will be too late!"

"It is—it is—oh! it is too late!" murmured the invalid, as he opened a glazing eye, glanced towards his benefactor, and closed it again.

"Oh! no—you may yet be happy—we may yet be happy—we may all be happy still together," cried the poor wife; "times must change, and here we have at length found a friend! Look up, John—see—there is your dear little boy, whom you love—and here is your wife who would die for you. Oh! do open your eyes, John—once more—make an effort, and all will be well. Think of your poor wife, and your dear—dear little boy; oh! think of them; and leave us not so!"

"If you value your husband's safety," ejaculated the benevolent Mr. Twill, "haste and procure him food. His strength is nearly wasted!"

"Alas! alas!" cried the miserable woman, "what am I to do? He will not speak to me—he will not look at me—he does not recognise his child! And yet how often has he played with that dear child, and fondled it, and kissed it. Oh! I cannot—cannot think of the past! It is maddening—it is distracting!"

Mr. Twill saw that remonstrance was useless: he therefore hastened down stairs, procured food from the bake-house and the coffee-house, sent up wine and cordials, and then despatched a messenger to fetch the nearest surgeon.

On his return to the chamber of destitution and poverty, he found that his efforts were too late; the wretched man had sunk beneath the accumulated diseases and sufferings produced by starvation and captivity. *There* was another sacrifice offered up to the most diabolical law that ever disgraced the codes of civilized nations!

CHAPTER XI.

GRACE DARLING AND HER FATHER ARE HERE MORE FULLY INTRODUCED TO THE READER.—THE STRANGER.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE RING.—EMOTIONS OF SOMERVILLE AND HIS WIFE.—THE SEA-GOD'S SON.

WHEN the hackney-coach, which bore the wounded Somerville to his home, had rolled away from the spot where the accident had occurred, the amiable and heroic girl, whose noble disposition had been fully manifested through the medium of that brightest of virtues—charity, hastened to rejoin her father.

"You are a good girl, Grace," said he; "and I am proud of you. As the youngster remarked himself, there was a host of idle lubbers by; but you were the first to bear a hand and overhaul his wounds."

"You know, my dear father," returned Grace, as they walked away from the scene of her kindness, "that it is nothing more than our duty to succour those who require attention and consolation in the hour of trouble."

"Avast heaving there, girl," exclaimed the old man; "all that's very good and very natural when the enemy's at a distance: but when we come to tackle close, yard-arm and yard-arm, it isn't everybody who is fond of spinning a yarn about his virtues that will be found at his post."

"If you mean, my dear father," returned Grace, "that those who affect charity and benevolence, do not always practise it, I should be

sorry to know more of this great city, where all the delusion I conceived in our own native spot about the goodness of the world are apparently doomed to be dispelled."

As our heroine made this remark, which was prompted by the most unsophisticated amiability, candour, and innocence, a stranger, handsomely attired, accosted her and her father, just as they arrived opposite the General Post Office in their way up Saint Martin's-le-Grand.

"A thousand pardons," exclaimed the stranger, in a hurried tone of voice—"but pray answer me one question."

"I doubt if our names are on your log, Sir," said Darling, with a respectful touch of the hat to one whom he felt to be infinitely his superior.

"Nay—but I espied from a distance, your kind offices to that young man ere now," continued the stranger in the same hurried tone of voice; "and I am exceedingly anxious to be acquainted with the result. Is he dangerously wounded?"

"Thanks to this little craft here that took him in tow," answered the old man, as he pointed with all the pride of a father to his blushing daughter, "he didn't founder this time."

"He is not hurt?" persisted the stranger, appealing to Miss Darling with an earnestness which seemed to intimate that her father's somewhat technical reply had not been sufficiently comprehensive or explanatory to relieve his apprehensions.

"His wound is certainly anything but dangerous," said Grace; and when she had thus satisfied the stranger's curiosity, she urged her father by a look and a motion of the arm which held his, to pass onwards. But the old man's suspicions had been awakened, and he was determined to ascertain how far they were well founded.

"I say, messmate," cried he, with all the bluntness, and at the same time with the respect, of a sailor, "were you the vessel that boarded the craft we picked up yonder just now; for if so, strike me ——"

"You affirm that his wound is not dangerous;" returned the stranger, without heeding this question, and again addressing himself to Grace Darling. "Did he say where he lived? did he give you his address? It is important that I should know all this—for my—for *his* sake."

"Stop there," said the old sailor, doubtless annoyed at the way in which his daughter was cross-questioned by the stranger; "might I make so bold as to enquire by what right, and for what reason, you've embarked on this voyage of discovery, and why you hove to and spoke us, if you really ain't the cruiser that crippled the vessel Grace took under convoy? As sure as my name's Darling ——"

"Darling!" ejaculated the stranger, turning suddenly pale: "Darling!" he repeated after a moment, during which he recovered his presence of mind: "of the Fern Islands?"

"The same," replied the old seaman. "But when did you and I sail together?"

The stranger made no verbal answer; but he drew a packet of letters from his pocket, selected one from the rest, and, displaying the superscription before the eyes of Darling and his daughter, seemed to wait for them to speak.

"Well," said the old man, "we were the bearers of those despatches.

It's quite true: and to think that in this great city we should meet just the same as if we'd never been off the same deck!"

"More singular coincidences happen daily," observed the stranger very abruptly. "When do you quit town?" and without waiting for a reply, he added, "But—no matter: my answer to the person from whom you bore this letter, will be ready this evening. I have your address—it shall be forwarded to you."

"And pray let it be a kind one!" said Grace, in a low and plaintive tone of voice, and with an earnestness which at the same time struck the stranger forcibly.

He gazed upon the beautiful countenance of the young girl for a moment, and his manners were partially embarrassed after she had thus spoken. Deep were the emotions which were then working in the breast of that mysterious man; but vast were the efforts he used to restrain them. Grace looked at him with a degree of interest and anxiety which proved that she also had been touched in some way or another by the circumstances of this evidently unexpected encounter.

"My answer shall be as you desire, Miss Darling," at length exclaimed the stranger, with a significant look the meaning of which was apparently understood by his hearers: "my answer shall be as you desire. And, now that I have granted your request—I have one to claim on your part. Did that young man, whose wound you tended—did he mention the place of his abode?"

"He did," returned Darling, speaking for his daughter. "But if I let you overhaul the log of my secrets, will you first satisfy me as to whether you mean to cruise in search of him under friendly or enemy's colours?"

"For his good I am desirous of knowing where he can be found," answered the stranger.

The old sailor mentioned Somerville's address; and the mysterious individual, who had so eagerly sought the information, bade him and his daughter a hasty farewell, and pursued his way in an opposite direction to that followed by those whom he had thus strangely met.

But ere they stirred from the spot where the above conversation had taken place, Grace Darling and her father lingered for a moment to admire the structure of the vast building near which they stood. It was the first visit of Grace to London; and her father had not been there for many years: the various sights and objects of interest were therefore almost as novel to the latter as to the former. Having sufficiently examined that edifice which many untravelled Englishmen admire, but which to those who have gazed upon the light Corinthian architecture adopted by the French in the Bourse, the Madeleine, &c., is but a dull and heavy spectacle, Darling and his daughter were about to pursue their way, when something upon the pavement attracted the attention of the latter. She had at first walked upon a hard substance; and upon examination found that the object was a ring which she remembered to have seen upon the finger of the individual who had only just parted with herself and father. It was a plain gold ring, with a red stone fitting into a lid which opened and shut over a little receptacle generally used for scent or aromatic odours. But the whole was so diminutive and so

tastefully arranged, that it was only after a very minute examination the miniature box could be discovered.

"He must have dropped it by accident," observed Grace, as she handed it to her father.

"And it would be only steering without a compass," returned he, "to attempt to catch him, to return it."

"We may enclose it to the same hotel to which we sent his letters," suggested Grace.

"Or keep it till he sends those despatches for us to take into the north, that he talked about," returned Darling.

This plan was deemed the most eligible that could be devised; and, having made up their minds to put it into execution, the father and daughter hastened to the humble lodging which they occupied in the vicinity of the Post Office during their short residence in town.

It was about six o'clock in the evening, when the promised letter arrived: but the messenger had not been desired to wait for any communication, and he departed before Grace or her father could desire the servant of the house to detain him. This was not their only dilemma: they had forwarded the letters they had brought to London for the stranger, through the medium of the twopenny post; and neither of them could recollect the street in which the Hotel, whither they were addressed, was situate. They remembered the name of the inn itself: but as there happened to be about two dozen in the metropolis with the same appellation, they were again baffled in their hopes of gaining by enquiry a clue to the discovery of a means of forwarding the ring forthwith.

"I have it," exclaimed Darling, after a long pause, during which he had racked his brain for a bright idea: "I have it!" and he danced about the room for joy.

"What? the right address?" enquired Grace, overjoyed at her father's sudden ebullition of mirth; for the alternative of carrying the ring back to their own home was in some way exceedingly repugnant to her feelings.

"No—not the address," explained her father; "but a chart that will not fail to guide me to the right port."

"How is that to be accomplished?" asked Grace.

"We know the address of that youngster whose bulkhead was stove in," returned Darling; "and we also know that the owner of this bauble meant to pay him a visit. I'll straight off to the berth of that youngster."

This scheme was immediately approved of by Grace; and as she was occupied with her little preparations for their journey, her father agreed to undertake the voyage alone, as he technically expressed himself. He accordingly summoned a cabriolet, jumped into it, and in process of time was set down at the door of the house in the Lambeth Road, where Somerville had taken lodgings.

"There's a young gentleman here," said he to the servant girl who answered his knock at the door, "that met with an accident to-day about his upper works, and had the splinter bandaged up, my dear—is there not?"

A reply in the affirmative was returned.

"Then please bear a hand and tell him that the consort of that little craft which took him in tow, is desirous of having a word or two with him on very particular business," continued Mr. Darling.

The girl executed her commission as well as she was able to understand it; and Darling was speedily ushered into the presence of Somerville and his wife, by whom—especially the latter—he was received with the most cordial welcome and the sincerest gratitude.

"I dare say you'll wonder what's brought me here," began the old man, when the thanks and the welcomes were over; "but will you first allow me to ask you a simple question. Was the gentleman, who threw you on your beam-ends, an individual dressed in black——"

"Yes," exclaimed Somerville, almost starting from the sofa, on which he was lying: "and with a large gold chain——"

"Exactly," continued Darling, "because—I think I know him."

"The scoundrel!" ejaculated Somerville. "But is this the portrait of the man you mean?" and he exhibited the likeness—the fatal likeness of him who had triumphed over the virtue of Eliza.

"The same," said Darling, after a minute's pause, during which he determined in his own mind how to act; for the manners of Somerville, and his irritation when the stranger was alluded to, had created many doubts in his mind. " 'Tis the same," he added, returning the portrait to the case which contained it; "but has he not been here to-day?"

"He in my house! he here!" shouted Somerville. "Oh! no;—does the snake venture into the lurking hole of the ichneumon? No—no!"

The wildness, with which Somerville uttered these words, and the congenial feelings which were betrayed by the varying countenance of the injured Eliza, created still more unpleasant suspicions in the mind of the old mariner than he had before entertained; and he determined to proceed with caution and reserve.

"He enquired for your address," said Darling, "shortly after you left the spot where you fell. He accosted me and my daughter, and——"

"Do you know him? do you know his name? or are you acquainted with his abode?" demanded Somerville impatiently.

"No," was the reply. "But he declared his intention of calling upon you; and that is why I came to seek you. He dropped this ring, and I should wish it to be restored to him."

The moment Eliza had espied the jewel which the old man produced, she uttered an exclamation of mingled joy and horror, and declared to her husband that she recognised the ring but too well. But she shuddered, while she spoke, as if the ring were the harbinger of death!

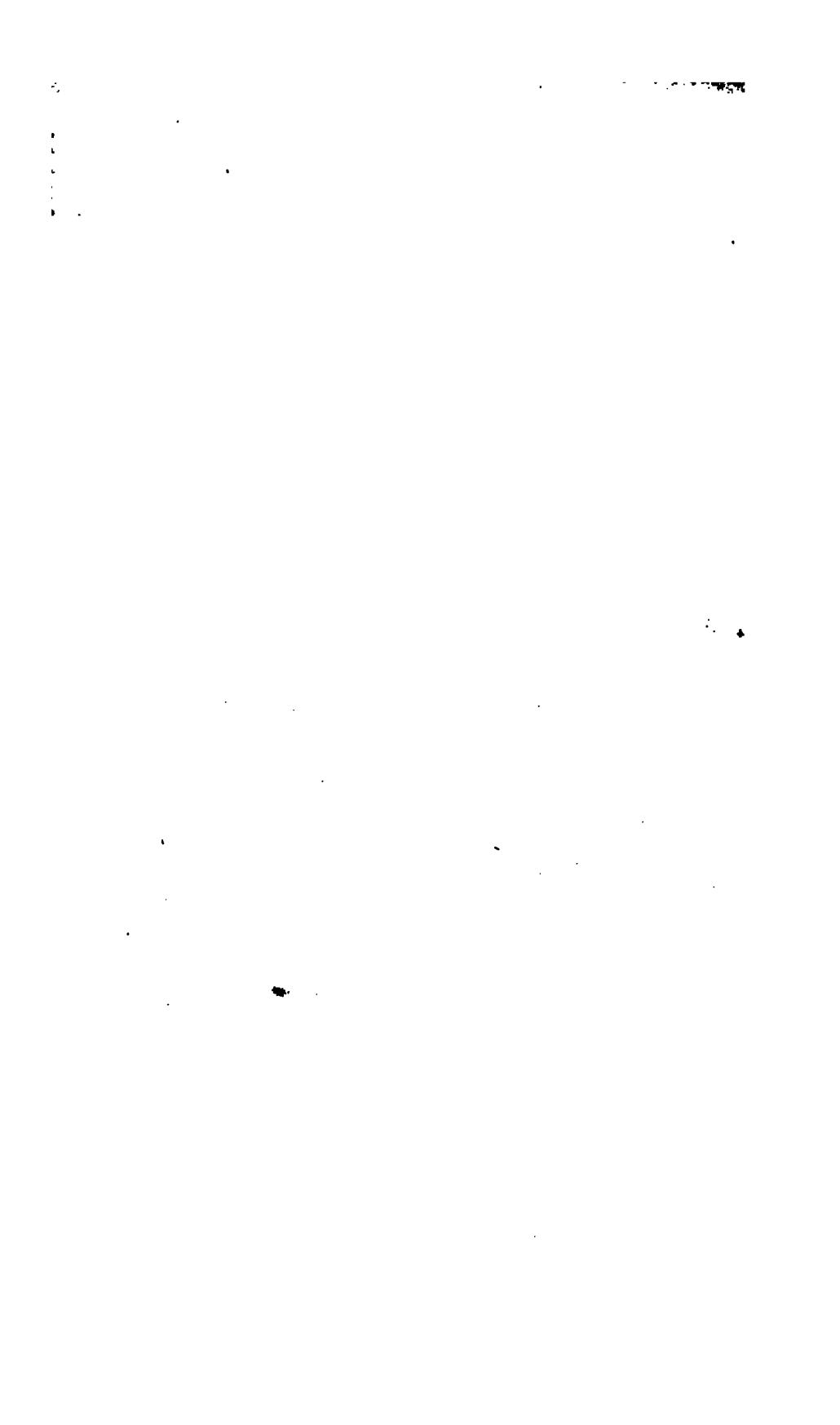
"It may serve as a clue," whispered Somerville to his wife; and then, addressing himself to Darling, he assured him aloud that it should be safely delivered to its rightful owner.

Mr. Darling hesitated: the scene which had just taken place before him, created new suspicions which made him afraid to leave the ring in the possession of such strange individuals as Somerville and his wife naturally appeared to him to be. Somerville saw what was passing in the old man's mind, and hastened to satisfy him.

"What!" said he, pointing to the miniature, while his countenance



Mr. Farling exhibits the King. —



wore an expression of indignation and wounded pride which Darling could not but observe ; "what! do you suppose that I would defraud you, or its rightful owner, of that paltry ring? Do you not feel convinced that there is—that there must be some mysterious connection between me and the original of this portrait? Else wherefore should the portrait be here? why should we dispute in the public street? and for what reason could he be so anxious to ascertain my address?"

"Excuse me," said Mr. Darling : "but I am a blunt sailor, and perhaps an obstinate and thick-headed old lubber, d'ye see? Say no more : there's the bauble ; and all I ask is that you will restore it to him who lost it."

The old man then bade adieu to Somerville and the beautiful Eliza, and, by the aid of the cabriolet that waited for him, was soon deposited at his own lodging.

Grace was delighted with the result of her father's scheme ; and he himself, on his return, was by no means sorry to perceive that the little table was spread for his supper, and that the smiles of his much-loved daughter would cheer the evening meal.

"To-morrow we shall be on our way, homeward bound," observed Mr. Darling, when he and Grace were seated opposite a comfortable fire.

"And we shall soon gaze upon that ocean whose very din is music to me," returned the brave girl ; "and we shall leave the sickening noise and bustle of this great city far behind us."

"Talking of the sea, my girl," observed Darling after a pause, "puts me in mind that the music of your voice has long been strange to my ears. Chaunt me your favourite song, Grace : it will do me good to hear it."

The dutiful daughter offered not the slightest objection ; but in a clear and melodious voice, and with much musical precision, she sang the following air, while her father beat time with his foot upon the floor :—

THE SEA-GOD'S SON.

From pole to pole the billows roll
 In boist'rous jubilee ;
 And the vessel brave floats o'er the wave,
 And laughs at the stormy sea.
 When the cold winds sweep o'er the mighty deep,
 The hardy sailor sings ;
 And the chorus wild of the ocean-child
 Through the vault of heaven rings.
 He fears not the blast as his brave ship fast
 O'er the wat'ry waste speeds on ;
 For when tempests rage, and loud winds blow,
 And the foam is white, full well does he know
 That he is the Sea-god's Son !

From shore to shore, triumphant o'er
 The vast abyss he rides ;
 And the Nereids play in the sun-lit spray,
 As the vessel onward glides.

The mermaid sings, and the sea-gull's wings
 Sweep the surface of the main ;
 When to far-off isles, where Spring ever smiles,
 The tall ship speeds again.
 From his native home does the sailor roam ;—
 But when his voyage is done,
 He anchors at length in a welcome port,
 Where the charms of his wife and children court
 The smiles of the Sea-god's Son !

Often as the old mariner had heard this—his favourite song—it invariably brought tears into his eyes ; for he was one of those British seamen, whose arms are daring, and whose prowess is mighty to do much, but whose hearts are ever susceptible of any appeal to the best sympathies and feelings that concrete in the human breast. Darling rose, as his daughter brought her strain to an end, and having hastily kissed the forehead of the noble-minded girl, retired to his chamber to seek that repose which only they, whose bosoms are divested of care and of the consciousness of crime, can fully enjoy.

CHAPTER XII.

A HITHERTO OMITTED EPISODE IN THE TALE OF ELIZA'S WRONGS, NOW COMES TO LIGHT.—THE RING.—A MYSTERIOUS ATTACK.

WHEN Mr. Darling had left Somerville and Eliza alone together, they no longer attempted to repress—for already, in his presence, they had not concealed—those emotions which the possession of the ring was calculated to awaken in their minds.

"Here is a certain clue to our deadliest enemy's abode and real name, even if he fail to reply to my letter," said Somerville, as he paced the room with hurried steps, apparently unconscious of the wound he had received and the partial weakness it had caused.

"I know this ring—oh! full well do I know it," exclaimed Eliza, her countenance expressing such feelings of inward horror that even her husband himself was alarmed.

"Eliza," said he, after a moment's consideration, "there is something more connected with that ring than you choose to confess, or rather—you have ever yet avowed. I conjure you, conceal nothing from me ! I have made your cause mine—I espoused it in wedding you : there should not be any secrets between us."

"Frederick," said she, in a low tone of voice, which was rendered hoarse by inward emotions, "you know that since our union I have referred as little as possible to those circumstances which caused my disgrace and originated in us both this thirst of vengeance, which, if not shortly satisfied, will consume me."

"And I, on my part, Eliza," returned the young man, "have religiously avoided the subject. Although sullied as to your body, you came into my arms pure and chaste in soul ; and I had neither the right nor

the inclination to refer to the past, save so far as it regarded our vow and my solemn promise—that promise which is registered in heaven!"

"Yea, Frederick," continued Eliza, and her cheek was ashy pale as she spoke, "we have understood each other without the interchange of many words; and when our oaths were once pledged to the accomplishment of our purposes of revenge, we conversed no more upon the events which threaten so materially to influence our future destinies. It now remains for me to unfold one more instance of the villainy—the blackness of heart of *that man*; and then you will know all, and there will not exist a secret between us."

Somerville seated himself upon a chair near his wife, and prepared to listen to her narrative with the most profound attention.

"Had I not been desirous of avoiding the subject of my misfortunes and my disgrace," began Eliza, "and were you not already acquainted with sufficient atrocities concerning that man whom we must still call by the hated name of Stanley, I should have long ago mentioned that which I am about to relate. Reproach me not, then, for having withheld the instance of depravity and crime which I am about to tell; and believe that you would perhaps never have known it, had not the adventure of the ring this evening in a measure compelled me to unbosom myself to you relative to this matter, as I have already done in reference to every other."

"Proceed," said Somerville; "and fear not my reproaches, Eliza."

"It was when I discovered that I should be a mother," continued the injured woman, "and that a being would shortly be born to publish my disgrace to the world, that I sought and obtained an interview with Stanley. With a portion of the particulars of that interview you are already acquainted. You know that I implored him to do me that act of justice which only a villain could have refused; and you are aware that he would not make me the only reparation which lay in his power. But when, almost frantic, I threw myself upon his mercy, and kissed the very dust at his feet, to endeavour to move that stern—that cruel—that unrelenting heart, which scarcely knew the name of Mercy;—when, bowed down by affliction, reduced to a state of despair, and horrified at the prospect of being compelled to meet and to support the contumely of the world;—and when I saw that all hopes of changing those stubborn resolves to a determination in my favour, were vain and futile, I besought him to take away my life as I lay stretched at his feet, and rid me of an existence which he had rendered intolerable. He sought to reason with me against the commission of suicide; but I was firm and resolved; and I swore that I would not survive my disgrace another hour. God only knows what demon possessed him at the time—God only can tell whether he really wished me to put my terrible menace into execution, and thus rid him of that which could not fail to embarrass him in future;—I say, that I cannot even at this moment divine his motives; but, when he found that my mind was bent upon suicide, and that I was resolved not to dare the opinion of the world, he said, 'Yes—Eliza, it is better that you should die—it is better that we should both leave this abode of sorrow and meet in a better state of existence.'—'Give me the means,' said I, 'and I will terminate my miserable life this very night. I will first retire to my chamber, and pray to the Almighty to forgive

me, and to take me unto his rest ; and I will then launch myself into the wide ocean of eternity.'—' So be it,' said Stanley ; ' and I will not long survive you.'—With these words he drew a ring from his finger—it was that ring, Frederick, which now is upon the table before you—and desiring me to listen calmly and attentively to what he was about to say, he opened the cover of the miniature coffer, and showed me another little thin gold lid which was perforated with holes as if to allow for the evaporation of the odours or salts placed in the small hollow beneath. This second lid he also raised, and discovered to my view a morsel of sponge closely packed in the diminutive hollow."

Here Eliza paused for a moment, while her husband hastily examined the ring, and found that it was formed exactly as his wife had described it. Even to the morsel of sponge—it was still the same ; and the whole was so admirably contrived as to be upon a scale which neither gave to the jewel an appearance of awkwardness nor of clumsy weight. Indeed, it may be as well to observe that such rings are common in France, and are much worn by the French ladies, the little cavities here described being usually filled with a sponge dipped in a very powerful scent.

" Yes," continued Eliza, " that is the ring, and its secret virtue is probably still the same as when he tendered it to me.—' This sponge,' said the ruthless villain, ' contains a drop of the most deadly poison that any chemist has ever yet invented. Its qualities last for years ; and they are fatal beyond redemption.'—I shuddered as he spoke ; but he bestowed upon me a glance of the most withering contempt, and proceeded as follows.—' Were you to swallow this sponge, instantaneous death would be the result : were you to squeeze the drop it contains into a tea-spoonful of water and drink it, in five minutes the effect would be the same. The man of the world,' he added, ' is a fool to exist without the means of dissolution constantly about him.'—I know not how I must have looked as I received the ring from him who would have added murder to his other crimes ; but I felt as if reason and nature must succumb beneath the weight of so much misery. I appealed to him again as a man who was one day to be a father—the father of *my* child ; and I asked him if he could himself act as the destroyer of her whom he had wronged, and who was destined to be the mother of his babe ? The fiend seemed bent upon his deadly purpose ; and it was then—doubtless with the view of urging me to the commission of a crime which I had at first menaced, but which I then abhorred—that he obliterated every remnant, however faint, of hope which remained in my bosom, by declaring that he was married ! I fell back upon the bench where I was seated, and fainted on the spot : when I was recalled to life, Stanley and the ring were gone !"

" Is it possible ?" exclaimed Somerville ; and rising from his chair, he again paced the room with agitated steps, crying, " O God ! why were we born to such miseries ? In what have we offended the majesty of heaven, to merit such punishment ?"

" Do not blaspheme, Frederick," cried Eliza : " we have been wronged, and will have our revenge. As Beauchamp, the American, murdered the seducer of Anne Cooke, whom he espoused as you have espoused me ——"

" Ah ! now again you revert to a circumstance which only ought to

be remembered when our courage fails," interrupted Frederick; and in a moment, feeling that they stood so deeply in need of each other's affection, they sank into a long and tender embrace.

Notwithstanding the entreaties of Eliza, Somerville persisted in hastening to a neighbouring chemist, whom he knew, and submitting the little sponge, which was concealed in the ring, to an immediate examination. He accordingly enveloped himself in his cloak, and, feeble as he was, sallied forth to satisfy his mind relative to the nature of the supposed poison.

But as he issued from the door of the house in which he lodged, he observed the figure of a man standing, and apparently watching his motions, on the opposite side of the road. The night was dark; and he could not distinguish the features of the person; but he soon ascertained that it was not he whom he so anxiously desired to meet again. He therefore troubled himself no more about the circumstance, until he found, after having proceeded a little way, that he was followed by some individual, whom, by his size and the outlines of his form, he recognised to be the one he had seen standing opposite his dwelling. He however pretended not to notice his movements, as it was just possible that his suspicions might be unfounded; but hastened to the chemist whom he was desirous of consulting. Fortunately that individual was at home; and to him, after a little preliminary explanation, did Somerville submit the ring and its contents.

The chemist examined the singular manufacture of the jewel, and then proceeded to scrutinize the sponge. He extracted it from its place of concealment, and after a short investigation, declared that it was saturated with a most deadly vegetable poison, which he named.

"Instant death would result from swallowing that morsel of sponge?" said Somerville in a tone of enquiry.

"Beyond all power of redemption," was the reply.

"And if it were mixed in a tea-spoonful of water?" asked Somerville.

"A few minutes would terminate the existence of him who drank it," answered the chemist.

Somerville thanked the *pharmacien* for his kindness, and was already some distance from the shop on his return home, when he perceived that the individual, whom he had before noticed, was again dogging his steps. Determined to ascertain if his fears resulted merely from a coincidence, or if he were indeed the subject of a more than impertinent curiosity, he passed into a bye-street, and thence struck into several narrow and out-of-the-way alleys, with which the neighbourhood of the Obelisk abounds. Still was he followed at a distance by the person whose motions he had thus put to a sure test; and when he could no longer hesitate what conclusion to arrive at, he suddenly turned round, and confronted the man with a determination to ascertain wherefore he was thus subjected to an annoying *surveillance*.

"You have followed me from my own house," said he; "and I demand to know upon what authority."

"I wasn't arter you," returned the man, in a dogged and sulky tone of voice.

"Deny it if you dare," cried Somerville. "Either this moment go

your own way, and let me pursue mine; or confess the reasons of your extraordinaay behaviour."

"I suppose one's free to walk where he chooses," said the man very coolly.

"But not to follow me, as a spy upon my actions," persisted Somerville; and by the light of an adjacent lamp he saw that the rigid countenance of the man relaxed into a smile, of half-cunning, and half-contempt, as he spoke.

"Just because my way happens to lie where your's does," returned the fellow, "you think it necessary to put yourself into all kinds of tantrums. Who the devil, do you suppose, troubles his-self about which direction you're going in?"

"In that case, then," observed Somerville, "the affair is soon settled; and if my suspicions were unjust, I beg you to excuse them. Pray, which is your road?"

"That's best known to myself," answered the man.

"Well—I am going to retrace my steps," continued Somerville; "and if you follow me now, it will be a proof that your designs are anything but honest; in which case I shall apply to the first police-officer I meet to release me from your impertinence."

With these words Somerville turned upon his heel, and hastened homeward. Every now and then he halted to ascertain if the man were still occupied in dogging his motions; but it appeared that he had effectually rid himself of so intolerable a nuisance. He was however mistaken; for on his arrival at the door of the house in which he lodged, he saw, not without a feeling of alarm, that the individual had resumed his station on the other side of the road, and that there was another lurking at a little distance.

Somerville's first impression was again to accost the first, and insist upon knowing the reasons of this unaccountable behaviour; but a moment's reflection pointed out the folly of adopting such a measure in reference to a man who might insist upon his right to loiter there if he chose. He accordingly entered the house by means of a pass-key which he possessed.

But on his arrival in the parlour, he found that Eliza was not alone. An old gentleman, with powdered hair, and attired in a complete suit of black, occupied a chair on one side of the fire-place. He carried a gold-headed cane in his hand; and his hat and gloves lay at his feet. His countenance wore an expression of cunning, and his lip a lurking sneer, which struck Somerville the moment he entered the room. On the whole, there was something in the visitor which did not please him.

"Here is Mr. Somerville," exclaimed Eliza. "Frederick, this gentleman is waiting to converse with you on the most particular business."

"I am ready to hear you, Sir," said Somerville, with as much politeness as his dislike to the appearance of the visitor allowed him to adopt.

"I believe you have just been released from the Bench, Sir," began the old gentleman.

"Before I answer any questions," said Somerville, sharply, "I must be better acquainted with him who interrogates me."

"This is my card," cried the visitor; and taking one from a small

morocco-case, he handed it to Somerville. " You will perceive that my name is Doctor Wokensmithers, M.D.; and that I reside at Stoke Newington."

" So I find," returned Mr. Somerville: " but might I beg to be informed of the nature of your business?"

" Ah! that's exactly what it is," cried the Doctor; " my business—eh? Well—you shall know my business. But, if I'm not mistaken, your name is Frederick Somerville—and you espoused a Miss Richards: this lady, I presume?"

" Proceed, Sir," said Somerville, astonished at the singular manner in which his visitor opened the business that brought him thither: " you are right in your conjectures."

" And you have some reason to be offended with a gentleman of the name of Stanley, I believe," continued the Doctor.

" The villain!" ejaculated Somerville. " His name as well as the reminiscence of his villainy, haunts me without cease. But it shall not long be so!"

" Softly—softly," cried the Doctor: " do not put yourself out of temper; it will only irritate you. Have you any friends particularly interested in your welfare?"

" Friends!" exclaimed Somerville, bitterly: " friends! do they exist otherwise than as the supplementary characters in a romance or play? Friends!"

" Ah! you don't even know your friends!" mused the Doctor, audibly. " 'Tis as I was told!"

" If your business be merely to interrogate me, Sir," began Somerville, " I shall thank you ——"

" Lose not your temper, my dear boy," very quietly interrupted Doctor Wokensmithers: " I shall not annoy you any more;" and without taking farther leave of either Somerville or his wife, the medical gentleman picked up his hat and gloves and rushed out of the room, as if he were afraid of being assaulted.

" This is most singular!" cried Somerville, when the Doctor had thus pleasantly taken himself off; and he had only just time to place the poisoned ring in a private drawer, where he knew it would be safe, when the noise of several feet upon the stairs alarmed him. " Eliza!" cried he, " some terrible treachery is in store for us."

" Oh! my dear, dear Frederick!" screamed the terrified Eliza, throwing herself into her husband's arms, as the door of the room was flung wide open, and the Doctor re-appeared, followed by two stout ill-looking men, one of whom Somerville immediately recognised to be the person that had dogged him, as already related.

" Excuse me, my dear Sir—pray, pardon me, madam," said Doctor Wokensmithers; " but I must do my duty. Ben."

" Sir," returned the individual who had been placed to watch the motions of Somerville.

" Is the coach waiting?" asked the Doctor.

" Round the corner, Sir," was the reply.

" Mr. Somerville," said the Doctor, sheltering himself behind his two men, " if you value your reputation and your health—you will consent to accompany me without disturbance. You are well enough at this moment, and *must* understand who and what I am."

"Leave my apartments, Sir!" exclaimed the infuriate young man. "I neither know nor care who or what you are: I owe nothing now, thank God! and fear not arrest. Leave the room, Sir."

"Ben," said the Doctor.

"Now, then, Joe," cried he who was thus addressed; and in a moment the two men, like bloodhounds loosened from the leash that retained them, rushed upon Somerville, and after a desperate struggle succeeded in securing his hands behind him, while the almost heart-broken Eliza fell frantic to the ground.

"Off with him—or we shall alarm the neighbourhood," urged the Doctor; but no sooner had he uttered these words, than Eliza started up, clung to her husband, and declared that he should be taken away from her only over her corse.

"What crime have I committed? where is your warrant for this treatment?" demanded Somerville, sitting exhausted upon the sofa, for he was weak and feeble.

"We only want to prevent a crime," returned the Doctor; "and as for the warrant, here's the certificate of two medical men."

"What?" ejaculated Somerville, a light breaking in upon his mind: "am I then arrested as a madman—as a regular lunatic? Oh! no—this is a refinement of cruelty which cannot be practised in a civilised community."

"Cruelty isn't the word, Sir," observed he who bore the name of Benjamin; "and as for civilised community, that's all gammon."

"The law shall punish you, scoundrel!" cried Somerville.

"Law's humbug in this here case," added Ben; "so if you ain't ready to trot, we must carry you. The jarvey's a very easy one. I picked out the best I could find. You'll be very comfortable down at the house, and ull soon have all your little comforts about you."

"Is this conduct to be persisted in?" said Somerville, addressing himself to the Doctor.

"It really is," was the reply, delivered in a tone of well-feigned grief and commiseration.

"Oh! no—it cannot be—it must not be," screamed Eliza, clinging with all her force to her husband.

"Now then, ma'am, let go there, please," cried Ben: "you shall come and see him in a day or so."

"I will never leave him!" cried the fond wife; and she clasped her husband forcibly to her bosom.

The rude hands of the myrmidons of the Doctor soon compelled the unhappy woman to loosen her hold; and despite of the desperate resistance which was made by Somerville, the victim was fairly secured and borne off to the carriage which waited close by.

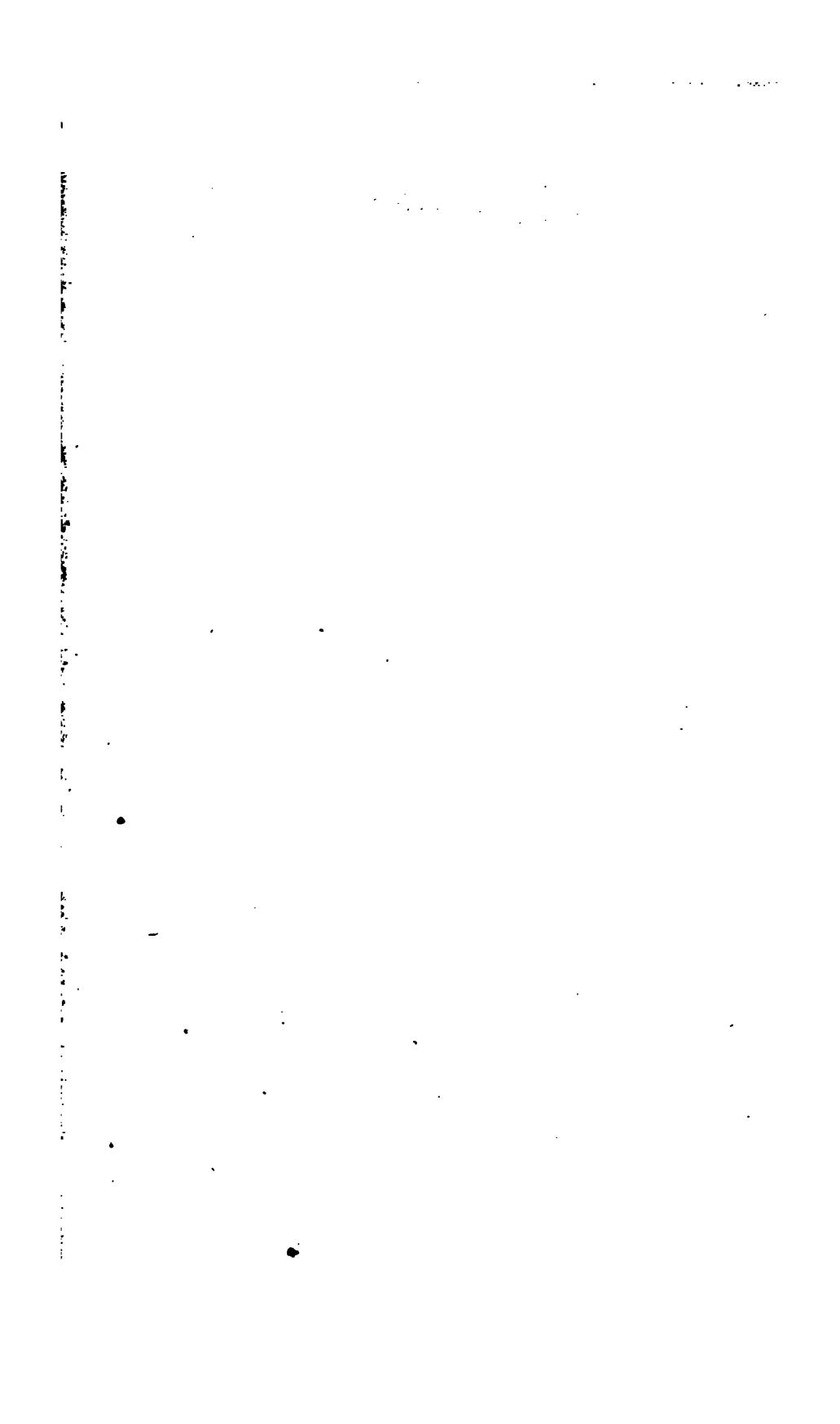
"O God! when will these afflictions cease?" murmured Somerville, as, exhausted and faint, he sank back in the coach and gave way to all the impetuosity of passion and emotion.

"This—this is indeed a terrible judgment upon me for one hour of frailty!" cried Eliza, when her husband was torn from her arms: and, nature succumbing beneath the heavy weight of affliction, she fell senseless upon the sofa.

The landlady found her in a state which defies all description,



“What have you done?”



CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH MR. TWILL IS MADE ACQUAINTED WITH THE HISTORY OF A GENTLEMAN WHOSE RUIN WAS CAUSED BY THE EXTENT OF A FERTILE IMAGINATION.

At nine o'clock the gates of the King's Bench close, out of Term, and at ten when the Courts are sitting. It was at the latter hour that the ceremony took place on that evening, which Mr. Twill was invited to pass with Mr. John Plummers. A crowd is always collected round the lower lobby, when those who *can* go out issue thence; and many a tale is told to the acute observer, by the workings of the various countenances on which the light of the lamp is reflected, at that door! The husband bids a short farewell to his wife, who is compelled to attend to her domestic duties at home; and the father conducts his children to the threshold over which he cannot pass. And then that husband and that father think of the happy home which they once possessed outside; and they grind their teeth, and compress their lips, to restrain their emotions; but a burning—scalding tear trickles from their eyes—and they rush in desperation to the rooms where spirits are sold, to obtain the wherewith to drown their sorrows.

As soon as the gates were closed, Mr. Twill proceeded to the apartment tenanted by John Plummers, Esq., of Tivey Nevitt Hall, Yorkshire. The room was as decent an one as could be expected to greet the eye in a prison. The walls were papered; there was a nice carpet upon the floor; a handsome mirror graced the mantel-piece; and the furniture was of a much better description than was usually in vogue within the circuit of the gaol. A table was already arranged for the anticipated conviviality; and on this occasion Mr. Twill foresaw a chance of drinking his punch out of a tumbler instead of a tea-cup. This was a great blessing, and we believe that Mr. Twill was very grateful for it.

"Well, you haven't forgot your promise," began Mr. Plummers, as Mr. Twill entered the room. "Sit down."

"I think you are tolerably comfortable here," observed Mr. Twill, accepting the invitation. "But I see you are reading the *Flambeau*."

"Yes—Sillyman is kind enough to send it to me," returned Mr. Plummers: "indeed, he forwarded me a dozen; but I have cut up eleven to make papers for lighting our cigars; and this one I kept to wrap up a pair of boots which I'm going to send out to-morrow to be mended."

"To wrap up boots!" exclaimed Mr. Twill. "What! are you afraid of their being dirtied?"

"No," answered Mr. Plummers; "but I don't want people to think that they are going to be pawned, which they certainly would do if I weren't to wrap them up. You see that in this place, the generality of the prisoners judge others by themselves. But help yourself, and I will keep my promise relative to the history of my life."

Mr. Twill did as he was desired; and Mr. Plummers, having imi-

tated his guest's example, commenced his tale in the following highly edifying manner.

THE HISTORY OF MR. JOHN PLUMMERS.

You see before you the most miserable man in existence ; one, whose ruin has been caused by the natural fertility of a vivid imagination, and whose sorrows in life have emanated, not from his vices—because he has none, but from his genius. However, to drop the third person—let me tell you that from my very birth I gave evident tokens of the most ready invention and of the most happy talent for telling a good tale, that were ever possessed by mortal man. Indeed I was scarcely six years old, when having one day taken a great fancy for some very delicious foreign fruit which my parents had just received from Paris, I ate as much as I could cram down my throat without actually bursting, and then deposited the remainder in the cook's bed. Gad ! how my father did storm and swear when he missed his fruit. In vain suspicion pointed at me : I denied all knowledge of the matter ; and when the house-maid went to the servants' rooms to commence her usual labours, she discovered the lost objects of my father's search. You see that it was useless for the cook to say she knew nothing of the business : my father swore that she was a thief, turned her away, and refused to give her a character—or rather, gave her such a bad one that she never got another place. I afterwards heard that the poor creature died in the workhouse ; but that's neither here nor there : I preserved my reputation even at six years of age, and that was all I cared about.

When I was twelve, my father sent me to a clergyman in the country, where there was another pupil beside myself. This clergyman had just been admitted to holy orders, and had married a young lady to whom he was very much attached (for she had a hundred a-year of her own) the day after ; so that when I arrived at his house, I found him celebrating those two very happy events. The other pupil, whose name was Tuffle, was a year or so older than myself ; and the bride whispered to me that he was a very amiable young man. But I had not much opportunity of judging the first day, for he was so uncommonly drunk, as was indeed the parson also, when I arrived, that I could only form a very imperfect idea of those gentlemen's characteristics by their conversation, which they seasoned with a good many oaths to make it the more emphatic. The lady herself assisted me to a considerable quantity of wine ; and we kept it up jollily, I can tell you ; so much so that at three in the morning the clergyman and his wife quarrelled as to who should carry the other up to bed. But they could not decide this business in a very satisfactory manner ; and so a compromise was established, by which the lady carried herself to bed, and her husband took a quiet and refreshing slumber under the table where he fell.

"What do you think of Mr. and Mrs. Holyboy ?" said Tuffle to me on the following morning.

"That they are the queerest people I ever saw," was my answer.

"I'm quite of a different opinion," said he. "A more pious and abstemious man than Holyboy doesn't exist ; and a more amiable lady than his wife you'd never wish to meet."

" You seem to like their manners very much," I added with an ironical smile.

" I'm quite transported with their ease and grace," was the answer.

" Aye—and if you were all three transported, it would'nt much matter," said I.

" Come now, none of that," said Tuffle, putting himself into a menacing attitude, whereupon I knocked him down, and then ran and told Mr. Holyboy that Tuffle had beaten me.

" He assaulted me first, Sir," cried he, rubbing his left breast, as if it were severely injured.

I swore that this was the most impudent falsehood ever yet uttered by human tongue ; and so impressive was my manner, that the clergyman believed me, and locked Tuffle in his room for the remainder of the day.

I thus made an enemy of a man, who afterwards had his revenge.

Mr. Holyboy taught me a great many things ; indeed, to him I am indebted for the elements of a very excellent education. I learnt how to drink a bottle of wine without its affecting me ; and every morning, before breakfast, we smoked cigars in the garden. On Sunday we had a good luncheon in the vestry, just before the sermon, when Mr. Holyboy went there to change his gown ; and then he'd preach such a fine discourse upon the blessings of temperance and the horrors of drinking, that I cried bitterly to think what a wicked fellow I had been. But my spirits were soon raised again ; for it was always on Sunday evening that we drank most.

These little occupations were varied by other amusements. I was frequently despatched to a discounter in the neighbouring town to obtain money upon bills ; and was told to call at the house of two or three charitable people who supplied my tutor with money to distribute amongst the poor, which he did ; for he divided it between himself and his wife, and made me a small present out of it. But at last he was arrested for forgery ; his wife ran away with the organist of the church ; and my father who had paid a year in advance, was obliged to take me home. Tuffle shared the same fate : but we did not speak, and so I could not ascertain what were the plans of his relations in reference to himself.

I stayed with my parents till I was eighteen, when they inhumanly expelled me from their presence, and sent me to sea as a lieutenant of marines ! And what do you think was the cause of this infamous conduct on their parts ? I will tell you.

An old schoolfellow of my father's had lately come into the neighbourhood of Tivey Nevitt Hall—for that was the name of our place—and was involved in desperate difficulties. He had a wife and family, and was on the point of going to prison, when my father, who was laid up with the gout, heard of his distress.

" John," said my father to me, " I hear that poor Scrubbinsworth is in a terrible plight. He once saved my life at school, when I fell through the ice on Bill Davis's pond, down by Mears' walk there—and I am glad of this opportunity of doing him a kindness. Here's fifty pounds : take em over to him, John, and tell him he's welcome."

I put the money into my pocket, mounted my horse, and rode over to Scrubbinsworth's cottage. But I got there just an hour too late; for the poor devil had been taken to prison, and his wife and four children had gone to the workhouse. I hated prisons in those times: besides, I thought that as he was once there, he'd better remain; for he was a sad extravagant dog, and if I'd given him the fifty pounds he'd only have got out and incurred fresh liabilities. So I went and invited a parcel of friends to dine with me at the principal hotel in the place; and precious merry we all got, I can tell you. We actually swam in a sea of champagne: the dinner came to thirty odd pounds, which I paid; and the remainder I kept for another spree. When I got home, I was regularly crying drunk; but my father fancied that the affecting scene I had doubtless witnessed was the cause of my emotion; and so he forbore questioning me till the next morning.

"Well," said he, when we met at breakfast, "what about that poor Scrubbinsworth?"

"Such a scene of affliction I never saw before," was my answer.

"Very touching, was it?" enquired my father.

"It was indeed," returned I. "The poor fellow, and his wife, with eleven small children ——"

"Eleven!" said my father: "why I understood he'd only been married about seven years."

"Nor more he has," was my reply; "but his unlucky fortunes have presented him with twins on every occasion. As I was saying, however, they all crowded round me, called me their saviour, their benefactor, their guardian angel, and—I rather think—their good genius. Well, just as I had given them the money, in comes a sheriff's-officer to arrest Scrubbinsworth for twenty odd pounds. Lord! with what glee did we count down the gold. I stayed and dined with them: a beef-steak and a pot of porter were our fare—and a happier evening I never passed."

"What sort of a looking woman is Scrubbinsworth's wife?" enquired my father. "I recollect at school he was rather a sharp fellow after the girls."

"The loveliest creature I ever clapped my eyes on," said I; "such beautiful hair—long and dark—such a nose—such red lips—such teeth—and a figure—Oh! I was really quite in love with her!"

"Singular for a woman who has had eleven children," observed my father.

At this moment the servant announced a lady, who was desirous of speaking with the governor.

"Let her walk in," said my father; and the stranger was introduced accordingly.

"I have to make a thousand apologies," she began; "but the desperate situation of my poor husband could alone have urged me to take this bold step."

I looked at her as she spoke with a glance of uneasiness, and perceived that she was a little, ill-looking, repulsive woman of about five-and-thirty, with red hair, and a terrible quantity of down upon her chin.

"Pray who are you, ma'am?" enquired my father.

"The unhappy wife of your wretched school-companion, Scrubbinsworth," was the fatal answer.

"Ah! indeed," exclaimed my father. "I'm delighted to see you, madam." Then, in a whisper to me, he observed, "But I don't think she's so very pretty."

God knows she was not: an uglier woman I had never before seen. I however tried to put a good face on the matter, and said, in answer to my father's remark, "Why—she may not suit all tastes, you know: but she has your mother's eyes to a T, Sir."

"Yes—and your grandfather's chin to a hair," returned Mr. Plummers, senior. "But why don't you speak to her?"

"Really, madam," I began, "I am afraid you must think me very rude —"

"Your son, Sir, I presume," interrupted Mrs. Scrubbinsworth.

"Yes—the one you saw yesterday," answered my father. "But you yourself are a lady blest with a large family, I believe. Eleven of them—and all twins, but one—that's no joke."

Indeed it was not; for Mrs. Scrubbinsworth burst into tears, declared that she did not come there to be insulted, and that she had better return to the workhouse whence she had just issued for the purpose of calling upon my father. I saw that a storm was brewing; and not choosing to be exposed before a stranger, rushed out of the room. Of course the whole business came out; and though I stuck most manfully to my tale, and swore that my father was the dupe of swindlers, when I met him at dinner-time, he candidly told me he did not believe a word I said, and should send me to sea. He had interest enough to procure me a commission in the marines; and I was thus expelled, at a tender age, from the paternal mansion.

I embarked on board the *Battleaxe* frigate, and sailed with the experimental squadron that was ordered to cruise in the Irish sea. The captain of the *Battleaxe* had invented an *apparatus* through the medium of which the square stern could be converted into a round one, and *vice versa*, at pleasure; and as he was the nephew of the son of the cousin of the wife of one of the Lords of the Admiralty, his suggestions had been submitted to the test of experiment, and he himself vested with the command of the squadron. The thing however turned out to be a complete failure; so he received the thanks of the Admiralty, and was made a post-captain for an invention which was worse than useless.

We were once anchored off Cork, and a precious nice time we had of it. Balls, parties, pic-nics, dinners, every day; so that the ships were left entirely to the care of the men, while the officers took care of themselves on shore. On one occasion, when we went to a pic-nic party, I met a young lady who pleased me amazingly; and I rather think I pleased her in my turn; for we soon became uncommon friendly together. She was on a visit to her uncle and aunt, who resided at Cork, and her name was Jennings—Susan Jennings: but who and what her uncle was at the time, I neither knew nor cared. Well, I stuck pretty close to her at the pic-nic; and learnt from her own sweet mouth that she had considerable expectations, that her uncle was a man of large fortune, and that she had twenty thousand pounds of her own, when she came of age or married.

All this was mighty agreeable; and as I didn't like to be behind-hand with her, in the possession of this world's blessings, I pretty quick made

her belief that I was the whole and sole proprietor of Tivey Nevitt Hall, Yorkshire—that my father had lately died and left me an income of eight thousand a-year—that a baronetcy had been promised—and that the situation of Chancellor of the Exchequer was not at that moment vacant for nothing.

Lord, how she did swallow all I told her; and when, after an hour's conversation or so, I offered to lay my treasures and anticipated honours at her feet, she almost swooned with delight. I really think that in a hundred minutes after our conversation began, we knew each other as well as if we had been acquainted as many months. One thing I am certain of, that I called her "Susan," and she called me "her dear John;" and then I persuaded her to consent to elope with me the very next evening.

"You see that house on the hill there, with the crooked chimney," said the lovely Susan, when we had come to so amicable an understanding.

"That one with half the roof blown off, dear girl?" enquired I.

"Exactly," said she: "it's a fine looking old mansion, isn't it?"

"Very," said I; "though rather small. It's only got four windows; and the panes of one appear to be made of wood."

"Ah! the distance deceives you," explained Susan. "Besides, the house runs very far back, you see."

I didn't see it, but I believed it; and there was an end of the matter.

"Well, I live there," continued Miss Jennings; "and if —"

"And if," said I impatiently, "you will meet me at the garden-gate to-morrow evening at eleven o'clock, I'll have a carriage waiting at a little distance, and you shall be made Mrs. Plummers of Tivey Nevitt Hall, in less than twelve hours."

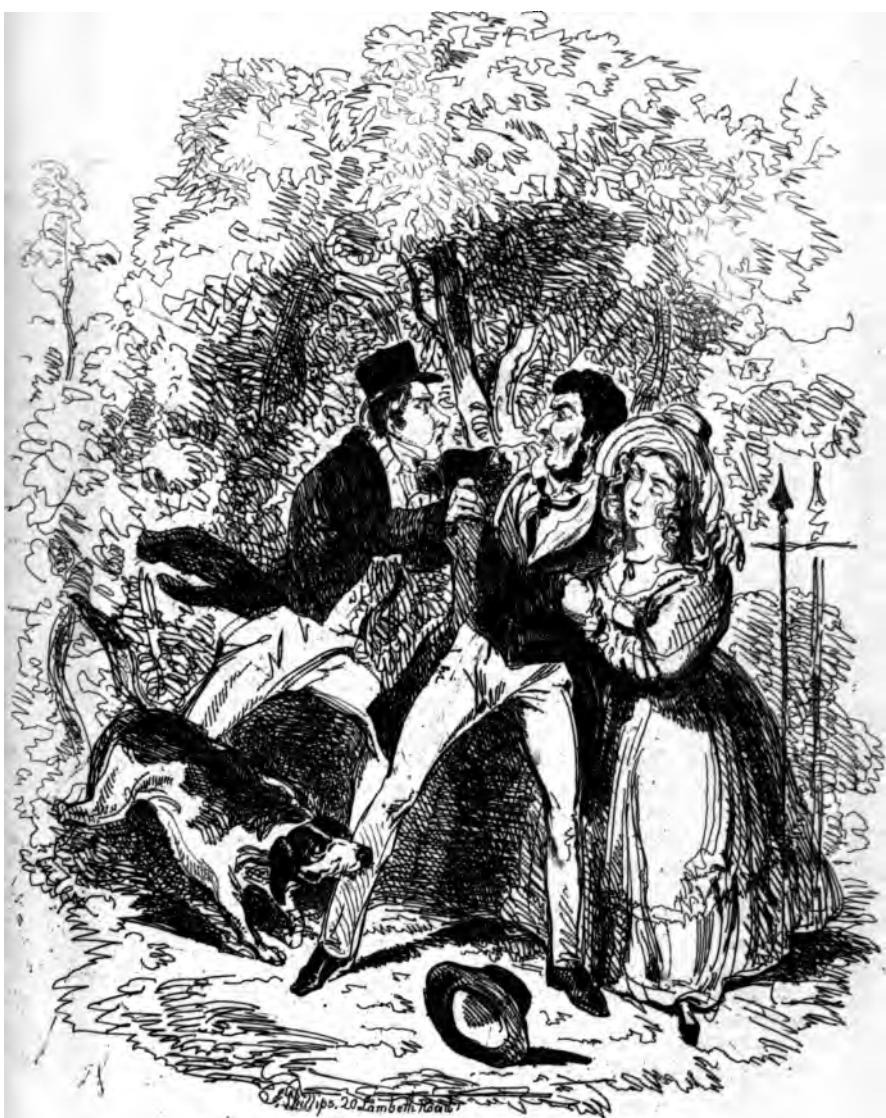
A deep blush, and a pressure of the hand were the only reply; but they indicated an affirmative, and I exclaimed, as I imprinted a kiss upon the dear charmer's lips, "*Veni, vidi, vici.*"

I kept the secret pretty close; and obtained a temporary leave of absence upon the plea that my father was on the point of death, that I had received a letter urging me to hasten to him immediately, and that it was of the greatest consequence for me to obey the summons.

True to my appointment, and burning to possess the twenty thousand—I mean, the dear girl, I was full half an hour before the time named as the happy moment which was to unite us no more to part. The evening was clear, and congenial to my sentimental mood. The planet of the night sailed majestically above my head; and a cursed great dog was barking at a little distance. The whole thing put me in mind of Gray's "Elegy;" and tears came into my eyes as I surveyed the fair scenery and the placid light of the lovely moon, and listened to the angry growls of that damned dog. I am not usually sentimental; but I was on this occasion. Indeed I had drank a great deal to keep up my spirits; and the prospect of the happiness which awaited me overpowered me to such an extent, that I could scarcely stand.

At length an adjacent clock struck the mystic hour of eleven; and as I sat on a stone at the gate of the garden before the abode of my beloved, I heard the front—or indeed, I believe the only—door of the house gently open. I strained my anxious eyes, and in the course of a minute had





Dr. G. B. Buffell walking with Mr. Farmer & Miss Ennys

the pleasure of seeing my intended stealing softly down the gravel walk. It appeared to me at that moment as if the moon shone more brightly—probably, smiling upon our loves; at all events, I am certain of one thing; which is, that the infernal dog commenced a more hideous yelping and howling than ever.

"Thanks, lovely moon," said I; "and damn the ugly beast that threatens to spoil our sport;" for I was very sentimentally inclined, as you may suppose.

In a moment Susan and myself were clasped in each other's arms.

"My dear, dear Susan," said I.

"My ever dear John," said she.

"God bless you, love," I added, nearly overcome by my emotions.

"Why, John," cried she, "you can scarcely stand. Surely you have not been drinking?"

"Drinking, my dearest girl!" I exclaimed. "Yes—I have been drinking intoxicating draughts of love from your eyes."

"Really, there is something the matter with you," said she, rather alarmed; and the truth was, I did lean pretty heavily upon the poor girl for support, such was the state of my feelings.

"Calm yourself, Susan," I cried, catching hold of the railings; "a little unpleasant encounter has alone caused this strange conduct on my part. The fact is, I was waylaid and nearly murdered close by here, by three rascally Irishmen, one of whom I killed in self-defence. The others ran away, dragging the dead body of their companion with them."

"Oh! my dear, dear John," exclaimed Susan; "to what dangers have you been exposed!"

"Yes—but let us hasten away," was my reply. "The carriage waits—the horses are fresh—and ——"

A loud shriek interrupted this passionate appeal to the chosen of my heart. I turned round, and was seized simultaneously, on the collar by a man, and in the leg by a dog. Gad! didn't I roar with the pain?

"Villain! scoundrel! robber! traitor!" were the words that thundered in my ears; and the man and the dog both gave me a good shaking at the same moment, as if it had been a preconcerted thing between them.

"Why—no—it can't be—yes, it is though, upon my honour!" cried I, catching a faint glimpse of the countenance of the man by whom I was thus rudely assaulted. "Isn't your name Tuffle?"

"Ah!" ejaculated the monster; "I think I recognise your voice, my young friend. Your name's Plummers."

I admitted the truth of the impeachment, and the man relinquished his hold, an example which the dog was speedily compelled to follow. I then commenced a fine harangue to justify my conduct in reference to Miss Jennings; and intimated that the advantage would be reaped by her, as my fortune was far superior to her's.

"I don't doubt that for a moment," returned the spiteful Tuffle—for it was really he; "because my fair cousin Susan hasn't a farthing in the whole world that I'm aware of——"

"Oh! Oh!" screamed the poor girl, writhing in agonies against the gate.

"And never will have, of her own," added Tuffle. "But that's not

the point. You must marry her to-morrow, and then I shall blow your brains out afterwards for having tried to run away with her. I only tell you the truth about her fortune, because, if she's deceived you, I don't want to be included in an indictment for conspiracy."

"O Patrick!" murmured the unfortunate girl; "I'm sure I stuck up for you when you wanted to marry the parson's daughter at Clish-maclarraw ; and though you had but a pet-lamb, I declared you had whole flocks of sheep."

"Then it's all a lie about the twenty thousand pounds," said I.

"What's that you call it, Sir?" demanded Mr. Tuffle: "it's certainly a little *extravaganza*, Sir ;—but as for a lie, ladies never tell lies, Sir."

I don't know how it was, but I suffered myself to be inveigled into a marriage with the young lady ; and a very happy couple we should have been, had not Susan discovered that my father was alive, and that the story about the eight thousand a-year and the baronetcy was all a farce. I couldn't reproach her with the deception she had practised upon me, any longer ; and I resolved to take and introduce her to my father ; for the truth is our funds were very low, and I was desirous of getting a good allowance from the old gentleman. Susan had not a sixpenny piece of her own : I was obliged to supply the money to buy the wedding-clothes, and put a new roof on her uncle's house, on which condition alone young Tuffle consented to give up all intention of blowing my brains out.

We arrived in safety at Tivey Nevitt Hall, and were well received by my parents, who appeared to have forgotten my former freaks. I had taken the precaution of informing my father, in the letter which announced my marriage and intended visit, that my wife was an heiress, and that she already enjoyed an income of three hundred *per annum*.

"If the old boy only says that he will double it, which he is sure to do," observed I to Susan, "we shall be as right as the mail."

You may therefore conceive the anxiety and suspense, with which I awaited his decision, when he addressed me the day after our arrival as follows :—

"My dear boy, I highly approve of your choice, and congratulate you upon having espoused an heiress. With three hundred a-year you may live very well, and I will get you stationed at Portsmouth, so that you needn't serve on board o'ship. My own property is rather encumbered ; but as I needn't give you any allowance now, since you've provided so well for yourself, I shall soon recover from my temporary difficulties. Embrace me, my dear boy—you are now a source of comfort to your old father indeed."

"The devil!" I exclaimed, flinging myself into my father's arms, and hugging him for a minute or so, while I wished he was dead. "But how do you suppose I can live on three hundred a year and my pay ? Why, my wife spends that in her clothes and trinkets."

"And yet she wasn't so exceedingly well dressed when you arrived yesterday, either," returned my obstinate father.

There it was, you see : what the deuce could I say ? the rebuilding of that cursed roof had done all this mischief.

"Why, she couldn't very well travel in silks and satins," I stammered out ; "besides, as we came from Ireland by the steam-boat, we had three trunks washed over-board."

"That alters the question," returned Mr. Plummers senior; "but I maintain, nevertheless, that you can live upon what you have got. At all events, you can try it for a year or so."

"Why, I want a thousand pounds, in ready money," said I, driven almost to desperation, "to redeem some deeds belonging to my wife, from a rascally lawyer who has a lien upon them."

"Go to Snatchem and Cramp, my solicitors," cried my father, "and tell them to propose an arrangement with the rascally lawyer you allude to. They can make better terms than you."

Thus was I beaten at all points; and I left my father in his study, to tell my wife of the awkwardness of the predicament in which we were placed.

"It is all your fault," said she, giving herself airs; "you *will* tell such a pack of lies, and they always get you into a scrape."

I retorted that she ought to be thankful to the singular habit which she pretended to reprobate; for if I hadn't told, and believed in return, a parcel of falsehoods, I never should have been forced into a marriage with her. These arguments called her to her senses, and we held a long consultation what course to adopt.

"Say that my bankers have suddenly failed," said she.

"No—incomes are not paid by bankers," was my objection to this really clever proposition. "But, I tell you what—I must get myself arrested for a couple of thousand pounds: only, in a friendly way, mind."

This luminous idea was immediately carried into execution. I procured a friend to issue a writ against me, upon a quantity of bills, which I gave him, and which I purposely ante-dated, so as to make them already due; and in the course of a day or two was arrested while at breakfast with my father. My wife pretended to faint, my mother swooned in reality, I cast an appealing glance towards my father, and he looked daggers at me.

"Officer, you must do your duty," said my father; "and you, John," he added, addressing himself to me, "must go to prison and pass through the Insolvents' Court. It will be a salutary lesson."

Here I was in a worse dilemma than before. I had fancied that my father would come down with the ready money, and that the friend, whom I had got to take out the writ, would have handed the spoils over to me. But I was caught in my own trap; and, not daring to avow the real state of the case, was conveyed to the county-prison.

This was very awkward; but I did not so much care about it, as I was my own detaining creditor; so I sent for the friend who had lent himself to the trick, and told him that it was "no go."

"My father," said I, "wouldn't bite; and so I must give up this scheme. You can return me the bills, and lodge my discharge at the gate."

"I am exceedingly sorry," said my friend; "but the bills must be paid first, as it put me to a very great inconvenience to advance you the money upon them."

"Now, now," cried I, "this is no time for joking. A truce to fun; for I'm in a hurry to get out."

But would you believe it? The rascal laughed in my face, and sauntered out of the room, telling me that I must pay the bills or remain in

gaol. This sudden stroke of adversity was enough to drive me to despair. I sent for my wife, and had a long consultation with her how to act; but we saw no chance of persuading my father to pay my debts; and we dared not confess that we were absolute paupers. So I was compelled to petition the Insolvents' Court; and after remaining five months in prison till the Commissioner came into the Northern circuit, was favoured with a hearing. But my false friend opposed me on the ground that I had given bills without a reasonable chance of paying them. I urged that no value had ever been received for them; whereupon the scoundrel declared that, if such were the case, I had accepted accommodation bills, and thus in either way came within the penal scope of the Act. This was conclusive; and the Court condemned me to remain two years in prison from the date of filing my petition.

"A little time for contemplation will do you good, my dear boy," wrote my father when this terrible sentence was made known; "and now that you are in prison, your wants will be few; so your three hundred a-year must be even more than you can reasonably expend. In the meantime your wife can stay with your mother and me."

There was I pent up in gaol without actually owing a farthing; and what was much worse, I hadn't one to help myself with. I was obliged to resign my commission in the marines; and so my little resources were dried up there. In a fit of desperation I sent for my wife, and resolved upon concocting some scheme to procure an allowance from my father. He had never enquired in what my wife's property consisted; and thus it was easy to invent a plan. Ha! ha! how I did laugh at the offspring of my fertile imagination!

I got a letter sent to Cork and put into the post there, addressed to my wife. This letter contained the news of a terrible conflagration that had burnt down all the houses, from the rents of which the three hundred a-year were derived; and this letter was supposed to be written by Messrs. Blarney and Gag, Susan's agents.

Whether my father suspected that it was a trick or not, I do not know; but as he had recovered from his gout, he declared his intention of proceeding to Ireland for the purpose of attending to our affairs. And in spite of all that Susan could say, he *did* go: how I wished the boiler of the steam-boat would burst, or that the coach would overturn down a precipice: but no such luck for Johnny Plummers. Of course my father found out all about my wife's relations, and visited the Tuffles at their house to which I had so deuced foolishly built a new roof. He returned in a devil of a rage, kicked my wife out of doors, bag and baggage; and swore he'd never speak to me again. Susan come to live with me in the prison, where she was brought to bed of a little boy; and my mother secretly allowed us a couple of guineas a-week, with which we managed to eke out as well as we could.

Susan was so weak and feeble that she could not suckle the child herself; and so a wet nurse was procured for it. But as the nurse was a married woman, with a family, the baby was sent to her house altogether. One day, when my wife had recovered, and was walking out to take a little exercise, she met a poor beggar-woman with a child in her arms.

"Pray, for the love of God, dear lady," said the beggar-woman, "give me a ha'penny for my poor starving babe. I've seven of them

at home, and my husband is only just dead : I sold all my things to pay for medicine during his illness. Do, pray, give me something, or I shall die in the streets."

My wife gave her a trifle ; and looked at the child, which was horribly dirty, and clothed in rags.

"God bless me," said my wife to herself, "this infant is uncommonly like my little Freddy :" but she didn't like to say so aloud, and passed on. She was, however, uneasy and uncomfortable about the thing ; and, in order to satisfy herself, went straight to the nurse's house.

"Mrs. Dilkins," said she, "how's little Freddy?"

"Oh ! lord, quite hearty," returned Mrs. Dilkins. "My sister-in-law has just stept out with him, round the corner, to buy him a ha'porth o' sugar-barley, the poor dear little innocent creature."

"Oh ! very well," said my wife : "I'll just wait till she returns, as I want to see the child."

"Lord bless ye," cried Mrs. Dilkins, turning very pale, "she won't come back for an hour or so, I dare say."

"I'm in no hurry," returned Susan ; and budge she would not.

Well, in about an hour, who should walk in but the beggar-woman, with little Freddy—for Freddy it was—in her arms.

"Here's the brat, safe and sound, Mrs. Dilkins," said the beggar-woman, not seeing my wife, who was seated behind the door ; "and here's the eighteen pence I promised you for the loan of it. I'll take it again to-morrow ; it excited an immense deal of pity. Why—I have not been through thirty streets, and I've already got my five shillings. Now I usually reckon upon walking sixty in the course of one day, and getting a penny in each ; but——"

She stopped short, for she saw that Mrs. Dilkins was making a most hideous face as well as a prodigious quantity of signs ; and turning round, discovered the reason. You may suppose that, when she espied my wife, she guessed the real truth of the story and bolted like a shot ; and you may also imagine that the baby did not remain much longer with Mrs. Dilkins.

Well, I completed my time in prison, and was at length freed from captivity. I hastened to throw myself at my father's feet, and implore his forgiveness, assuring him that I was occasionally subject to a species of mad fit, and that all my follies were originated by that distressing malady.

"In that case," said my father, "it will be impossible for me to leave you my property ; so I shall make a will by which you will be allowedance to so much a month."

"No, my dear father," cried I ; "I mistake ; I am not mad—I am only foolish."

"Ah ! then you can't manage an estate," returned the old gentleman, doggedly.

"Lord, my dear father," I exclaimed, driven almost to desperation by his obstinacy and perverseness, "I'm as down as a hammer—fly as the knocker of Newgate—wide awake as Jack Ketch, I am !"

"At all events you are the greatest liar in existence," cried my father ; and he drove me ignominiously from his presence, with an allowance of three guineas a week, to keep a wife and child—and another coming !

But as luck would have it, the old fellow died one morning ; and I hastened to the house to establish myself there as lord and master. My mother took upon herself to give orders to the servants ; but I deuced soon put a stop to that, and was actually obliged to threaten to turn the old lady out of doors if she gave herself any airs in that way. My wife bullied her too ; so between us she had a nice time of it. But it served her very right for not having allowed us more than two guineas a week when we were in gaol. Indeed I don't know whether I should not really have put my threat into execution, and kicked her out, bag and baggage, as my poor wife had been by my inhuman father ; but I couldn't very well do it till after the corpse was buried ; and then there was an awkward change in my affairs.

The interment took place ; and my mother quite disgusted me with her tears. As for Susan, she bore the loss with a proper spirit, and laughed and danced about the house as if nothing had happened. The will was produced—the deepest anxiety prevailed around—but I knew that I was all right, and told Snatchem, the lawyer, to make haste and read it. I also swore a great deal, to show him that I was not to be trifled with.

"Never mind, Joseph," said I to the footman ; "don't stand blubbering there ; I shan't turn you away. I shall only kick Ellen and Mrs. Bodson out of the house, because they take my mother's part ; but you and Sophy shall remain."

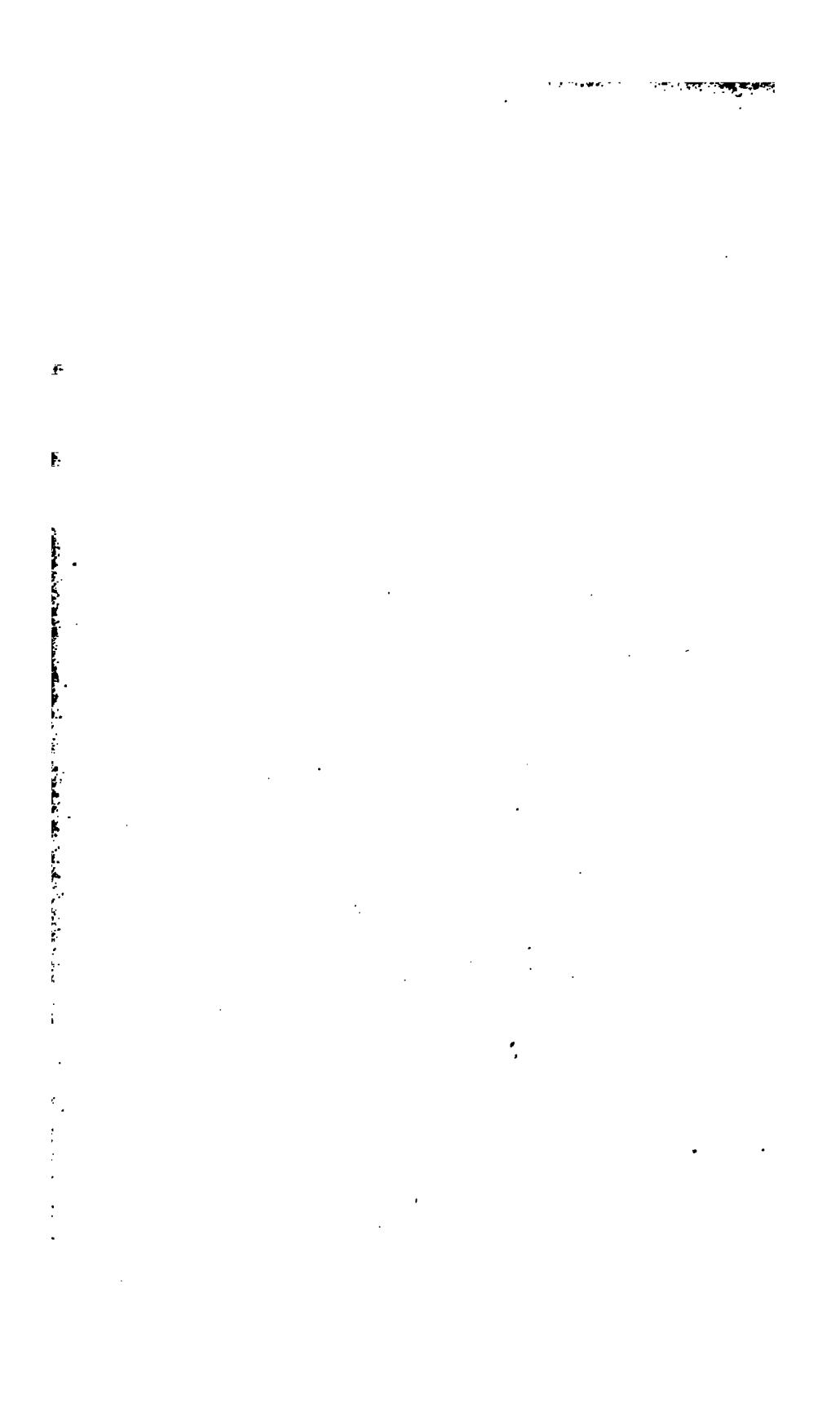
Well, the lawyer opened the paper that contained the will, with a great deal of ceremony, and began perusing its contents aloud. But to my dismay, my unnatural old father had left his wife sole executrix, and the property was bequeathed to her with a right of disposal as she chose. My name was only mentioned in a codicil recommending me to my mother's bounty.

Here was a pretty business ! At first I swore my mother had forged the will, and I was going to call in the police from the neighbouring town, and give her in charge ; but the witnesses were present, and so *that* hope failed. But I went to work in another way. I had secured all the ready money, amounting to three hundred pounds, which I found in my father's desk ; and taking myself off, with my wife and child, commenced a law-suit to set aside the will on the score of insanity on the part of my father, and undue influence on that of my mother.

Gad ! didn't I draw up a pretty statement. I swore that my mother often used to beat my father to compel him to obey her ; whereas, poor dear creature, she never even whipped me when a child ; and I invented a thousand proofs of my father's madness. I said that he used to fancy himself to be Bacchus, the god of wine ; and, in order to support the character, got so precious drunk sometimes he could scarcely see ; and this, with many similar stories, made up a very plausible tale. I got my wife to swear to the truth of it ; for you know a wife is "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh," and therefore can't refuse to stick up for her husband. But I was worsted in this ingenious attempt to recover my rights : the servants were brought forward as witnesses, and I was proved to be one of the greatest liars in existence, according to the account of the judge. Indeed, it was with the utmost difficulty that I avoided a prosecution for perjury, so infamously was I treated.



The Reading of the Will



I had expended all my three hundred pounds, and still owed my lawyer about two hundred and fifty more. He sent me in his bill, with a request that it might be paid; but as I didn't return any answer, he was polite enough to write it all over again, and enclose the new copy, which was just the same as the other, only that he had signed his name to it. Well, a month passed away, and during that time I heard no more of the lawyer; but the moment the thirty-one days were elapsed, may I be hanged if he didn't send a sheriff's-officer and arrest me. I wrote to my mother to solicit her assistance; but Snatchem and Cramp replied to my letter, telling me that the infamous conduct of myself and wife had driven the old lady delirious, and that all future correspondence must be addressed to them. They moreover added that they could not take upon themselves the responsibility of advancing me the amount that I required; but they enclosed me five pounds, and said that the same sum should be forwarded every week. This was something; so I procured a *habeas corpus*, and came to the King's Bench from the county gaol.

My allowance was quite sufficient to keep me, but not enough to support a wife and two children—for my family had lately received another addition. So, in very simple language I informed Mrs. Susan that I didn't require her services any longer, and that she'd better return to her excellent relations, the Tuffles, at Cork. This didn't suit her views at all; at least if one might judge by her fainting on the spot, for I really think she loved me. But I was obliged to take care of Number One; and was resolved to carry my designs into execution. I generously gave her ten pounds to see her way clear, allowed her to take the children with her, and dispatched her back to her uncle's. In a week or ten days, I had the satisfaction of hearing that she had arrived safe; but that those thieves, her relations, would not be able to keep her long. I was, however, in hopes that they'd feed and lodge her, till Government gave poor laws to Ireland; and then she'd have *them* to look to.

In the meantime my allowance continues, and my mother is still unable to direct her own affairs. She is seventy-two years of age, and the doctor declares will live for ever. That's a pleasant prospect for me, who have already been fifteen years in this horrid den.

"Indeed," said Mr. Twill, when this strange history was brought to a conclusion, "I thought you told me you had only been three years in the Bench."

"The truth is," explained Mr. Plummers, "my imagination is so fertile, and my genius so inventive, that I cannot tell the precise truth."

"And so your father was not tutor to the King of Greece, then?" enquired Mr. Twill.

"Not a bit of it," was the reply.

"And your estates in Egypt, America, and other parts?" continued Mr. Twill.

"All purely fabulous," answered Mr. Plummers; "mere specimens of a flowery imagination, like the flying *apparatus*, and other things I told you about this morning."

"Very singular!" ejaculated Mr. Twill. "But what has become of your wife?"

" Oh ! her uncle turned her out of doors," cried Mr. Plummers, " and for some time I allowed her thirty shillings a-week. But I have lately found it more economical to let her live with me. She has a little room in Blackman-street, close by, and passes the day here, going out at night, because I like to sit up and drink with my friends. She's a very good creature, and makes an excellent wife ; washes out my room and my linen, and darns my stockings. When the old lady dies, she'll be mistress of Tivey Nevitt."

" And the two children ?" enquired Mr. Twill.

" Oh ! they're big chaps now," said Mr. Plummers, " and live with their mother. But what do you think became of Tuffie ?"

" I really can't say," observed Mr. Twill.

" Why, he is so reduced in the world, his uncle and aunt both being dead, that at length he was obliged to come to London and be cad to one of the London Conveyance Company's Omnibuses. He's at this moment at the treadmill, for having thrashed an old gentleman who remonstrated with him because he cheated a young lady out of change for a sovereign."

Mr. Twill having thus become acquainted with the life and adventures of John Plummers, Esq., remarked that it was late, and took his leave, considerably edified by the singular autobiography which had really afforded him no inconsiderable degree of amusement.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOMERVILLE OBTAINS A SLIGHT INSIGHT INTO THE CUSTOMS AND HABITS OF THE DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE.—HE SEES MUCH TO ASTONISH AND EXCITE HIM.

So great a load of misfortune had fallen upon the head of the unhappy Somerville, within a short period, that physical and moral energy gave way ; and, as he sank back in the vehicle, he almost felt as if he were really the maniac for which he had been taken. Remonstrance with his keepers, he knew was vain ; and equally futile would have been an appeal to the people in the streets through which the coach passed. He therefore temporarily resigned himself, in a species of sullen stupor, to his fate ; with the determination of essaying everything in his power to effect an escape the moment an opportunity should present itself.

The coach passed up the Blackfriars Road, turned into Union-street, and in about twenty minutes from the time it left the Lambeth Road, rolled over London Bridge as quickly as the crowd of vehicles would permit it to proceed. It then proceeded up Gracechurch-street and Bishopsgate-street, and hastened along the direct road through Norton Folgate towards Stoke Newington. It was about half past ten o'clock ; still the extensive traffic of those vast thoroughfares had not terminated for the day. The lights burnt bright in the various shops ; and the doors of the gin-palaces were thronged with idlers, both male and female, either waiting to renew the oft-repeated dram, or having just partaken of the ardent fluid. Hungry and famished wretches, who had been prowling

throughout the weary day at the windows of the baker, now hastened to disburse a portion of the pittance, which they had received from the hands of charity, in the purchase of liquor. To procure a dram they willingly sacrificed honour, chastity, and even personal safety; and they, who are befitting candidates for a hospital, rush eagerly into the very den whence emanate sickness, hunger, turpitude, and crime! A fine rain began to fall; and then might be seen those unhappy females, who pursue their loathsome trade at night, seeking shelter beneath the entrances to shops or alleys; and their gaudy attire, their half-naked forms, and their repeated bursts of forced laughter as they addressed obscene remarks to each other, seemed to intimate that they cared not for the inclemency of the wintry blast. But their shivering limbs could not defy the piercing cold; nor could those ebullitions of mirth conceal the distress and the deeply-seated sense of shame and degradation which stirred within them!

Ever changing, ever varying were the crowds that passed up and down the streets through which the coach passed. There might be seen the young and timid milliner hurrying home from her long—long day's work, with the scanty reward of her toils in her pocket; the tradesman's apprentice and the lawyer's clerk, assuming the swagger of their masters, and annoying all whom they met as much by their own impertinence as with the odours of their cheap cigars; the old libertine, whose vicious tastes urge him to seek the means of gratification in the hour of darkness; the drunkard hastening to the tavern where his midnight orgies are about to commence; the policeman, ready to receive a bribe from the rich rioter, and to thrust the poor one into a cell till the morning; the wretched wife on her way to the pawnbroker's to obtain the means—the only means that remain to her of procuring a meal for herself and famished little ones; the distracted husband, who has in vain sought employment throughout the day, and who wanders about the streets, because he dares not encounter the sunken eye of his watchful partner in misery; the servant-girl hurrying to meet the villain who will seduce and leave her to perish in ignominy and want; the young aristocrat, whom a hope of amusement and change has lured from the vicinity of Bond-street and St. James's-street; the wealthy shopkeeper, contented with the earnings of the day; the debtor, sneaking abroad at the only hour when he need not dread the eye of the bailiff; the pick-pocket—the thief—the honest man—and the rogue—all, all were crowding there together; and scarcely one recognised the business or the occupation of another!

The vehicle passed rapidly through the streets; and, after having traversed a much more quiet and tranquil neighbourhood than that which we have just described, it stopped at a house on the left hand side of the way, a little past the Stoke Newington new Church. The house stood back about a hundred yards from the road, and the interval was occupied by a garden, round which there was a high wall of dingy red bricks. In the middle of the part of the wall that faced the road, there was a low green door, which was opened by a man bearing a lanthorn, the moment the coach stopped.

"Now, then, if you please, Sir," said Benjamin, addressing himself to Somerville, "here we are; and in a minute or so you'll be as happy as ever you was in your own house."

"Pray do not compel me to use violence," whispered the Doctor. "You shall be made as comfortable as you can, and have a private room to yourself. I cannot say more."

Somerville alighted from the vehicle, and looked anxiously round to see if there were a chance of escape. But he was weak and feeble; the man called Ben was on his right, and Joe on his left; behind him stood the Doctor with a large cane; and before him was the individual with the lanthorn. He was therefore completely hemmed in; and all attempts at resistance would have been useless.

He was conducted up a narrow and dirty walk, through a garden apparently filled with low shrubs, as far as he could judge by the dim light of the sickly moon; and instead of entering by the front door of the house, the procession passed round to one at the right hand side. This admitted them into a small passage, illuminated by a single rush-light; and there they halted for a moment, while the man who bore the lanthorn opened an inner door, through which he disappeared. In a few moments he returned, accompanied by a middle-aged female, of forbidding aspect, and dirty appearance. She carried a pair of candlesticks with lighted wax-candles, in her hands.

"All comfortable up-stairs, Susan?" inquired the Doctor.

"Just as usual," was the abrupt answer.

"And Maria?" demanded the Doctor, averting his head, as he addressed himself to her who was in fact his housekeeper.

"There!" said Susan significantly; but without indicating any specific locality.

"Very well," ejaculated Wokensmithers. "Now then, show us to the parlour; Mr. Somerville will take some refreshment."

Susan led the way by the door which had admitted her into the passage, and having traversed a large and cheerless apartment, the naked walls of which were scrawled over with figures drawn in charcoal, Somerville found himself in a comfortable parlour. There was a large fire burning in the grate, and a table was spread for supper. The housekeeper placed the lights upon the mantel-piece; the Doctor made a sign to the two men, who had accompanied him in the coach, to withdraw; and the third, who answered to the name of Isaac, was desired to "tell the gentlemen that supper was ready."

"I hope you will be able to eat a mouthful or two, Mr. Somerville," said the Doctor.

"Do your patients usually eat the first evening, Sir?" demanded the young man, bitterly.

"Oh! dear me, yes," returned Wokensmithers; "I had one only a few days ago who fancied himself to be Heliogabulus, or Maximim, I forget which, and ate a roast leg of mutton entirely to himself. But, hush—here are my other guests."

As the Doctor uttered these words, the door of the room was thrown open, and five individuals made their appearance. They started when they perceived Somerville; but the Doctor hastened to introduce him as a future companion, and then they crowded round the new-comer, and nearly wrung his hand off by turns. Somerville was at first somewhat alarmed at this sudden and emphatic display of courtesy on their part; his fears were however soon alleviated by a whisper from Wokensmithers, who informed him "that they were all perfectly harmless, that

they knew the nature of their affliction as well as he himself" (meaning Somerville—a comparison which made the young man start) "and that he would find them highly diverting in their way." They then all sate down to a really good supper; and Somerville, whose plan was to affect the utmost compliance with the Doctor's wishes, in order to throw him off his guard, and thus obtain a better opportunity of escaping from his clutches, pretended to eat of the viands with which he was supplied.

The other guests at the supper-table were all individuals, who, as the Doctor had observed, were sane enough to be permitted to take their meals with him, and even to walk about the house and garden alone in the day time: but each had some particular eccentricity or weakness which indicated the nature of his malady. One was a solicitor, who, on account of the failure of a law-suit, had sunk into a state of despondency, which had ultimately verged into insanity; although upon professional matters, and those only, he was as lucid in his arguments and discourse as ever. The second was a politician, who, disgusted with contemplating the misdeeds of the great, and possessing a sensitive mind which could not brook the oppression of unjust laws and partial rulers, had professed and taught republican opinions—a system of conduct that entailed endless persecution upon him, and at length had driven him to a mad-house. The third was a clergyman, who, having refused to read the Thirty-Nine Articles, had been dispossessed of his gown and the means of subsistence; and who, having seen a young wife and only child die of want and destitution, had been consigned to a mad-house and supported there by the very prelate who had wronged him, and who feared to suffer the evidence of such despotism and tyranny to exist at large in the world. The fourth had been in a situation of confidence about the person of a late high personage, and had been induced by his master to give false evidence at the memorable trial of that master's injured wife—a circumstance which preyed so deeply upon the poor fellow's mind, that he was at length consigned to the abode where we now find him: and the fifth was a wealthy slave-owner of Jamaica, who had pursued a long course of the most unprecedented rigour towards his unhappy dependants, and whose mind had been unhinged by the perusal of a work which brought home to his imagination his infamous conduct in all its worst colours.

Such were the individuals with whom Somerville now found himself; and in a very few minutes he perceived that they were all sane when conversing upon certain points; but that in reference to others they were all prone to utter nothing but absurdities.

"I do not think, Doctor," said the lawyer, addressing himself with the utmost solemnity to Wokensmithers, "that you have any legal right to detain the gentleman whom you have brought to us this evening."

"Don't be absurd," cried the clergyman: "you are perfectly aware that the gentleman is a sensible person, and never will be brought to believe that they, who have not had a chance of knowing our blessed Redeemer, can be condemned to eternal perdition. No one can credit so monstrous a doctrine—repulsive at once to common sense, and derogatory to the wisdom and justice of the Eternal."

"I shall send the case before a special jury," said the lawyer.

"And I before the Ecclesiastical Court," cried the clergyman.

"Is this the liberty of the subject?" exclaimed the politician. "Are we to be bowed down to the earth beneath the weight of taxes—to see our wives and little ones in a workhouse—to toil only for the benefit of the great? How is it that in France the bread is less than half the price it is in England? Why is the aristocracy in this country to be pampered and made much of, and the lower orders to be treated like dogs? Why can a rich man break lamps and insult the police with impunity, or be released upon the payment of a paltry fine, whereas the poor man is sent to the treadmill for only half the offence? Does hereditary title confer hereditary wisdom? And who dares call a just assertion of our privileges by the name of treason? All power emanates from the people; and the people have a right to choose their own governors. Our kings are stipendiary magistrates whom we may depose at will."

"Kings! Kings!" cried the perjured witness; "ah! talk not of kings. There is no virtue in a court—no rectitude in a palace. I was sent to Italy to try and discover something wrong in the conduct of my illustrious master's wife: but—no—no—she was as pure and spotless as snow, and *he* knew it. But I suffered myself to be led away—to be bribed—to be won over to *his* purposes—and Oh! I perjured myself! Many more did so too—Oh! yes, they all did; for they knew she was as innocent as a lamb! It was a horrible plot—a conspiracy—a scheme to ruin her!"—and having uttered these words in a tone of voice which bespoke the most acute agony, the poor fellow buried his face in his hands and wept bitterly.

"Who cries?" exclaimed the slave-owner. "Is it Corah weeping for Tamango? Ah! I know that the poor youth fell beneath the gory lash! I know that my cruelty killed him! You need not reproach me with it: that deed is deeply imprinted upon my memory. Its trace is there, there—" he cried, striking his forehead forcibly with his hand; "and the worm of remorse is gnawing me here!"

He placed his hand upon his heart, and groaned bitterly: large tears trickled down his countenance; and his whole frame seemed convulsed by deep emotion. His eyes rolled about fearfully in his head; and Somerville thought within himself, that if that man's crimes had been great in this world, his punishment was already at least commensurate with the extent of his delinquency.

It was evident that no one paid the slightest attention to the discourse of his companions, beyond catching an occasional word which bore immediate reference to his own ideas or to the matters which occupied his attention; and now that each had given vent to his thoughts, they all commenced a series of chattering, which, turning upon five different topics, and consisting entirely of declamation, produced a singular though sorrowful effect, and made Somerville almost shed tears to think that he was actually categorised amongst such beings.

"I never shall forgive myself for that oversight," said the lawyer.

"It was all done by bribery," cried the false witness.

"The bishop was at the bottom of the whole affair," observed the clergyman.

"Great men are invariably despotic and unjust," exclaimed the politician.

"Tamango's blood calls for vengeance!" shouted the slave-owner.

"The day of retribution must come," said the politician.

"Blood for blood—wrong for wrong," ejaculated the false witness.

"It's illegal," observed the lawyer.

And thus did those men utter a thousand disjointed sentences, which frequently seemed to bear reference one with another, and which were nevertheless respectively instigated by feelings and emotions widely discrepant in themselves. Frequently was this conversational jargon carried on to a pitch which would have actually excited the laughter of young Somerville, had he not been too deeply bowed down by grief to indulge in aught approximating hilarity and mirth.

In the middle of this singular conversation, which seemed to make no impression upon the Doctor, who continued to eat his supper with a most excellent appetite, the door was suddenly thrown open, and a figure, half-naked, with long black hair hanging wildly over his shoulders, and his eyes rolling terribly in their sockets, rushed into the room. He was attired in a shirt, which being unbuttoned at the breast, displayed the emaciated form beneath, and a pair of dark trousers reaching just above the hips. His feet were bare and bleeding, as if he had just been running over flint stones; in his right hand he flourished the leg of a cold fowl; and in his left he clenched an enormous piece of bread. His cheeks were thin and hollow; his beard had not been shaven for some days; and his whole appearance was forlorn, dirty, and wretched in the extreme.

"Ah! ha!" he cried, as he capered into the apartment, and munched his bone and then the bread as he danced about the room: "I have outwitted the old girl at last, eh! This will teach her to starve *me* again. Does she think I can live upon the moonbeams: no—no!"

And he laughed, and ate, and danced, as if he were the merriest fellow in existence.

"Hey day, what does this mean?" exclaimed the Doctor. "Why, here's this confounded Jem broke loose again. Isaac, call Ben."

But Isaac had scarcely arrived at the door of the room, on his way to execute his master's orders, when Ben and Joe rushed into the apartment, and darted upon the unfortunate maniac with a violence and ferocity which made Somerville's blood curdle in his veins.

"Here you are, are you, you cursed good-for-nothing ragged thief!" cried Ben, dealing the maniac a terrible blow upon his shoulder, which felled the poor wretch to the ground.

"Get up, you d----d scoundrel, get up with you," exclaimed Joe, distributing sundry brutal kicks upon the ribs and back of the madman with brutal violence, and uttering imprecations too disgusting to be here recorded.

"What has he been about, the villain?" demanded the Doctor, who seemed very anxious to join his men in their cowardly attack upon his unfortunate prisoner.

"Why, Sir," answered Ben, "he broke loose just as I and Joe were getting a mouthful o' somet to eat; and made his escape into the kitchen, where he helped himself to all he could lay his hands on. Well, we ran after him into the garden; and a terrible race he led us over the gravel walks, and through the bushes. At length he returned

again to the house, and here he is ;" and in order that the Doctor might not mistake *where* he was, the brutal fellow bestowed another kick with his iron-shod boot on the maniac's ribs.

"They starve me, they starve me—Oh! they starve me!" cried the madman, screaming with agony. "They think I can eat the rats and the mice in the horrid place where they put me to sleep; but I cannot catch them."

"Silence, beast?" thundered the Doctor.

"Silence, don't you hear?" cried Joe, as the maniac screamed with the pain of another blow; and when the poor wretch attempted to rise, he was knocked down by the demon that addressed him last.

"The strait-waistcoat," said the Doctor. "And, Ben ——"

Ben, who was about to clothe this victim of cruelty in the strait-waistcoat, relapsed for a moment from his occupation.

"Take him up stairs, Ben," continued the Doctor, glancing towards Somerville, on whose mind he was perhaps unwilling to make too unfavourable an impression the first evening: then in a whisper, he added, "And give him four-and-twenty good cuts with the dog-whip. *That* will teach him to go stealing in my kitchen again, the villain!"

The maniac was raised from the ground by his two brutal keepers, and borne out of the room, still laughing, and gnawing his stolen provisions, in spite of the pain he was enduring from the blows he had received. The five guests at the supper-table looked with the greatest apathy and indifference at all that was passing, with the exception of the slave-owner, who cried bitterly. The scene probably reminded him of the deeds of by-gone days, and the atrocities to which he himself owed his insanity.

Five minutes after the removal of the maniac from the supper-room, shrieks of the most piercing agony re-echoed through the house; and the voice of the unhappy sufferer, appealing to that God whom he had not forgotten in his mental aberrations, fell in torture-wrung accents upon the distracted ears of Somerville. He was about to fall at the feet of the monster Wokensmithers, and implore for mercy in behalf of the maniac; but the awkwardness of his own position, and the necessity of maintaining a tranquil and pacific line of conduct in order to work out his plans, compelled him to forego the charitable desire.

When supper was over, the Doctor dismissed the five gentlemen (to whom he was particularly civil, because their friends paid liberally for their maintenance) to their apartments; and then offered to conduct Somerville to the one that was to be allotted to him. The young man professed his readiness to retire to his chamber: he was accordingly shown to a room on the second storey, the window of which overlooked a small yard at the back of the house. Thick iron bars formed a strong grating outside the casement; and when the Doctor had wished Somerville a good night's rest, and withdrawn from the apartment, the heavy bolts outside the door made a harsh and discordant noise as they were drawn upon the inmate of the chamber. Somerville shuddered, as the din fell on his ears; and he now felt that the imprisonment he had endured in the King's Bench was a paradise to the captivity of a mad-house.

That Stanley was the author of this outrage, he did not for a moment doubt; and the conviction that he was thus dealt with for the purpose of superseding the possibility of his wreaking his just vengeance upon the

head of his wife's seducer, only added fresh gall to the bitterness of his hate.

When the footsteps of the Doctor were no longer heard in the passage, which ran from one end of the building to the other, and upon which the doors of upwards of a dozen chambers opened, Somerville proceeded to examine the situation of his apartment. Wokensmithers had left him a candle; and he was thus enabled to survey the interior, and to satisfy himself that it was comfortably furnished and well supplied with every necessary which the most particular person could desire. In reference to the exact locality of the room, a glance through the casement showed Somerville that it was situate at the corner of the building; and that in the yard immediately beneath, there was an out-house, the sloping roof of which was at a distance of probably sixteen feet below his own window. This roof reached almost to the summit of the wall that enclosed the yard; and thus an easy means of escape presented itself, if the grating were once removed from the casement. The bars were thick and strong: Somerville did not however despair of eventually succeeding in his designs; and his spirits rose as he reflected that on the following evening he might probably be enabled to put his scheme into execution. He fancied that it would be easy to secrete a knife from the supper-table; and this, converted into a species of saw, he fondly hoped to render subservient to his purposes.

Having thus tranquillized his mind as much as possible, and considerably elated with the hope of shortly folding his beloved Eliza in his arms once more, Somerville retired to his bed, and shortly sank into a profound slumber.

He had probably been asleep about four hours, when he was awakened by the most appalling screams, which echoed through the house, and caused his hair to stand on end as he suddenly started up in his bed, alarmed by the violence of the cries. The screams did not issue from the lips of the maniac whom he had before seen in the supper-room; but they were evidently the tones of a female voice. He shuddered, and his heart sank within him, as this terrible conviction flashed across his mind; and he anathematized aloud the inhuman cruelty of the monsters who could thus oppress the weak and the feeble.

Suddenly the screams ceased, and the noise of a door opening at the back of the house attracted Somerville's attention. Voices in the yard then fell upon his ear, and the cries recommenced for a moment; but they were suddenly stifled as if by the application of a gag to the mouth of the sufferer; and the silence of the night was only interrupted by the curses and threats of two individuals, whom Somerville recognised to be Benjamin and his companion Joseph, in the yard beneath.

Somerville crept gently out of bed, and hastened to the window to ascertain the nature of the proceedings which occupied the ruffians at that hour. The night was however too dark, and the panes of glass too dingy, to allow him to distinguish anything clearly: he therefore opened the window as cautiously and silently as possible, and applied himself more earnestly to watch the movements of the Doctor's myrmidons.

The two men were standing at the door of the out-house we have before alluded to; and Somerville, with straining eyes, at length per-

ceived that they supported a female form. His suspicions were almost immediately confirmed by the dialogue which took place between the ruffians, and which he plainly overheard.

"Curse the old beldame for letting the girl into the house again," cried Ben: "she always does play us this trick."

"At three o'clock in the morning too," returned Joe; "and Susan knows that the Doctor has ordered her to be locked up here every night till the cold has cooled her brain a little."

"Now, then, fire away Joe," said the other. "Pull the straps a little tighter, will'ee? I'll take cursed good care she don't open her screeching mouth again. There—now she's fainted; so much the better; she won't make no noise."

"I'd sooner have all the mad-ward of incurables to attend to, than this girl Maria," cried Joe. "She hasn't been here quite two years yet, and a precious deal of trouble she gives, to be sure."

"And no one has paid anything for her, neither, for the last quarter," said Ben. "She don't cost much though," added the wretch with a chuckle; "a crust o'bread and a cold potato once in three days ain't very extravagant."

"There, now I've done," exclaimed Joe. "Gad! how she shivers; I think she's going to recover from her fit. Chuck her down hard, and that'll stun her a bit: we shall then get a wink or two of sleep. I flogged Jem till he was insensible; or else I'm blowed if we shouldn't have been up all night."

The man ceased speaking, and Somerville heard a heavy thing fall, as if thrown with violence, against the earth: the door of the shed was then banged and locked, and the two wretches retired into the house. A solemn silence succeeded the accomplishment of their inhuman task; and Somerville returned to his bed—but not to sleep; for the shrieks of the unhappy girl still seemed to ring in his ears.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RED-CROSS OF ALBION.—MR. DARLING RELATES AN ADVENTURE OF HIS EARLY YEARS.—AN UNEXPECTED VISIT BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE LOSS OF THE POISONED RING.

SOFT and balmy was the slumber which fell upon the eyes of Grace Darling, when she sought her couch on the night that teemed with events so fatal to the happiness of the young couple whom her father had left in possession of the poisoned ring. The sleep of innocence and health is ever uninterrupted; and the mind of the guiltless dreads not to encounter the darkness and solitude of the bed-chamber.

Grace rose at an early hour; and having performed her modest and simple toilet, she hastened to prepare the morning meal. As she thus busied herself with domestic duties, preparatory to the departure of herself and father from London, she thus warbled one of those patriotic songs which her venerable sire loved so much to hear.

THE RED-CROSS OF ALBION.

Calmly and sweetly
 Summer gales blowing,
 Red-Cross of Albion ! expand to the breeze :
 Proudly and fleetly
 O'er the deep going,
 The vessels that bear thee have conquered the seas.
 Envy dissembling,
 Timid and trembling,
 The foemen of Britain for quarter implore :
 Vainly and idly,
 Her enemies widely
 May dare to assert that her reign is no more !

Purely and brightly,
 On the deep beaming,
 Glorious Apollo ! withdraw not your rays !
 Gaily and sprightly
 To the breeze streaming,
 The standard of Britain triumphantly plays.
 Peril e'er braving,
 Over us waving,
 The Red-Cross of Albion our glory shall be ;
 Conquest extending,
 Freedom defending,
 That banner must rule both the land and the sea !

Her father entered the room as Grace brought her song, the patriotic words of which were eulogistic of that banner she had been taught from her cradle to respect, to a conclusion ; and he imprinted a kiss upon her chaste brow as he complimented her on the taste and feeling with which she had warbled the air. Grace blushed, for she had not suspected that she was overheard ; and her father slightly chid her for her bashfulness.

" You need not be ashamed at having sung Old England's praises," cried the sturdy mariner ; " and I am delighted to see that your heart is made of as sterling oak as any tar's that ever stepped between stem and stern."

" My earliest impressions are connected with the glories of the British Navy," returned Grace ; " for from the cradle have I been taught to revere the names of those heroes who fought and conquered for their native land.

" Right, right, girl," cried the old man, a glow of enthusiasm lighting up his eyes ; " and I feel proud of you, as well as of your noble brothers, Grace. Something tells me, that although you're only a woman, d'ye see—you'll still show the spirit of a man. I've seen too many strange things in my life, Grace, to be astonished at a trifle ; and I am convinced that the log-book of our family will have to record something great of you."

" My dear father," said Grace, with a smile, " the days of Amazons have past."

"What man-o'-war's-men were they, Grace?" demanded the old mariner: and without waiting for a reply, he continued as follows:—"But as I was saying, Grace, I've seen some rough work in my life; and the affair of the cutter against the two schooners wasn't the most inconsiderable of those adventures that I might spin a yarn about if I chose."

"You shall tell me the story once more, as we sit at breakfast," returned Grace.

"With pleasure, my dear girl," exclaimed old Darling; and having hastily swallowed his morning's repast, he drew his chair closer towards the fire, and without farther preface commenced the following anecdote.

THE PRIVATEERS.

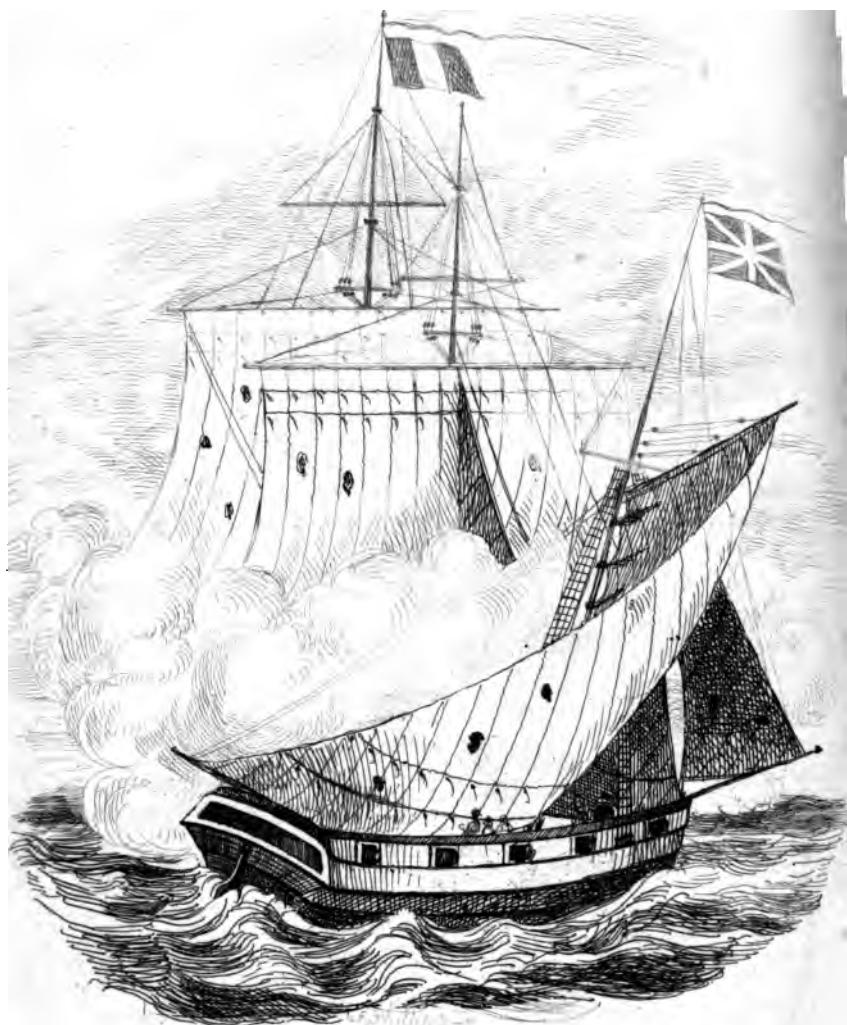
In the year 18—, I was serving on board of a small craft, which was cruising in the Channel. One night we were overtaken by a terrible storm, which commenced with a sudden squall and carried away our top-mast in a jiffey. We were close by the North Foreland Light when this happened; and the lieutenant, who commanded the cutter, proposed to run for Ramsgate harbour. But this was found to be impossible, and our only chance of living out the storm was to try and get as much sea-room as possible; for the wind blew straight from the land, and the Goodwin sands were close by to swallow us up. We might have made for the Downs, but that was also a hazardous venture: and so we let the vessel run straight before the wind.

Towards daylight the storm abated, the sea grew calmer; and we rigged another top-mast, the loss of which was the only injury of any consequence that we had sustained.

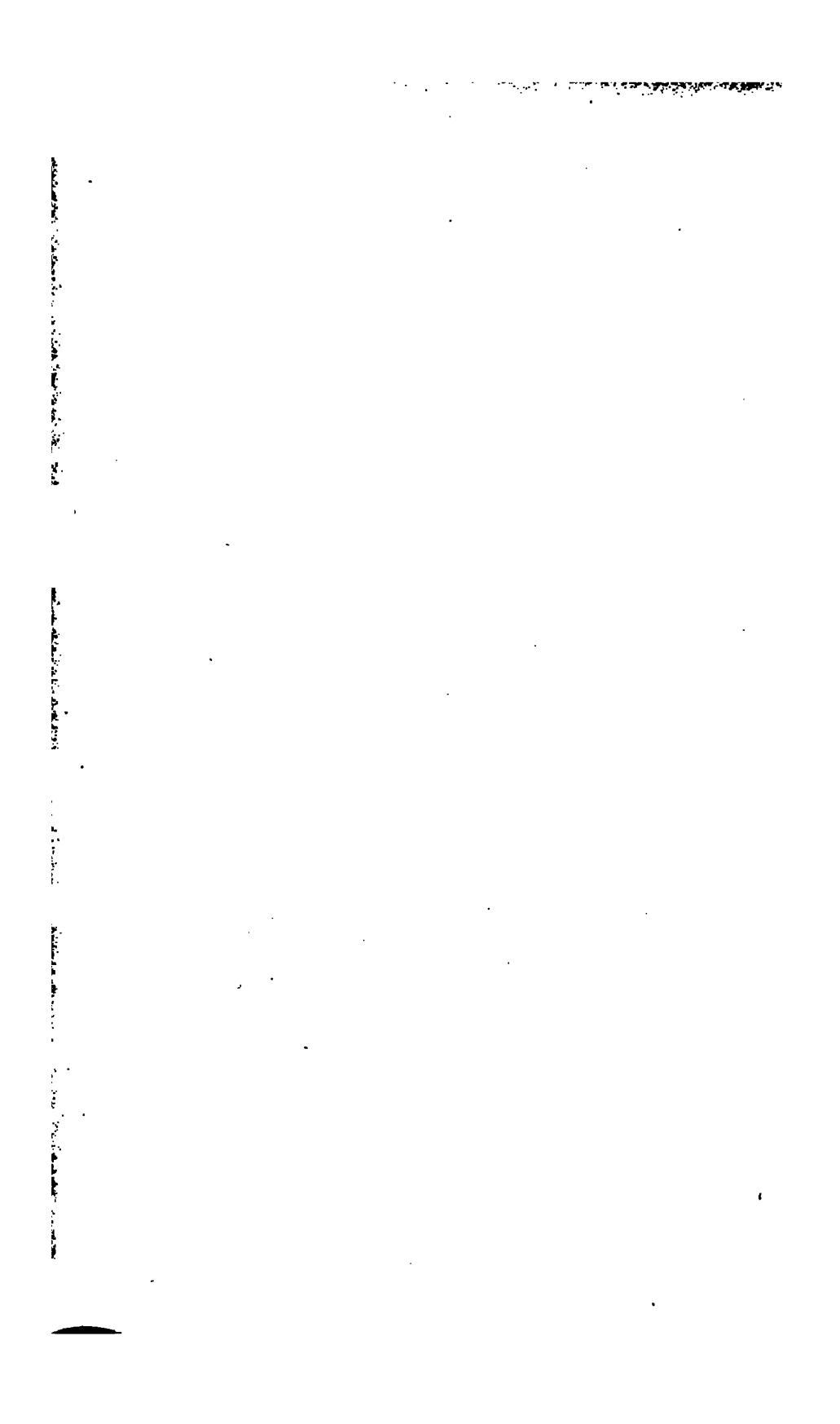
But if we had escaped the sea, we had not avoided the enemy; and no sooner was it really light, than we found ourselves under the guns of a large brig, which was coming down upon us at nine knots an hour.

"Now then, my brave boys," says the lieutenant, "bear a hand and clear for action. We won't tumble into the power of those lubbers, though they do seem ready to devour us, without firing just one shot to support the honour of the flag. So up with the jack, my boys—and if necessary, nail him to the mast."

Well, we got everything in order as soon as we could; and presently the brig hoisted her colours, and we saw that we had fallen in, as we had anticipated, with a Frenchman. *Mounseer* thought we were going to strike without exchanging a shot; but he found himself mistaken. We peppered him as nicely as ever he had it, from even a heavier craft, before; and though the action only lasted about ten minutes, it was one of the hardest fought skirmishes I ever had to do with. To render the French justice, they behaved as nobly as men could do; and when at length they boarded us and hauled down our colours themselves, they treated us with as much civility as if we had only been exchanging a few morning compliments. The lieutenant knew French perfectly well, and he and the captain of the brig soon entered into a pleasant little chat together, when we all got on board the enemy's ship, which tacked about, took the cutter in tow, and ran direct for Dunkirk. What a beautiful vessel was that brig! She moved like a duck upon the water, and rode so gracefully over the waves, it was a pleasure to sail in her even in a



The Cutter and the Brig.



high sea. To give the devil his due, the French certainly beat us in their models.

Some prisoners of war, who had been suffered to walk about the town at large upon what they call *parole*, had made their escape just before our arrival; and so the authorities were compelled to send us to prison. The captain of the brig begged very hard that we should be permitted the indulgence which the others had abused; and, like a noble fellow as he was, he stated that we had fought like lions, and that he never knew a really brave man break his word. But his prayers were unavailing, and we were all lodged in the gaol.

"If you had left us at large," said the lieutenant to the mayor of the town, "I would have answered for the honour of my men with my life: but now that you treat us in this manner—for which however I cannot blame you—I promise you that I shall leave no opportunity of escape unattempted."

The day after we were in prison, the French captain called upon the lieutenant, and put a purse of money into his hands.

"I dare say," said the Frenchman, "that you are not over-well supplied with money, as you did not anticipate a visit to France"—(here he and the lieutenant laughed); "and without coin you will not be able to procure many little comforts to which you are accustomed. This is my address," added the captain, giving the lieutenant a card, "when I'm ashore, and you can return me the money as soon as the war is over, and you are safe in England again."

This he said to prevent any refusal on the part of the lieutenant: and when he had uttered these words, he disappeared like lightening. It was quite true that we had scarcely a shot in the locker, till this supply came; and often and often did we thank the noble fellow in our prayers, who had behaved so generously towards us.

The gaoler had a daughter whose name was Fifine; and as luck would have it, Fifine fell in love with the lieutenant, and the lieutenant fell in love with her. She was a sweet pretty girl—about fifteen years of age only—and as artless and innocent—although bred in a prison—as an infant child. Her eyes were dark and sparkling—her hair brown—her figure slight and genteel—and her manners fascinating and agreeable. Her mother had been dead for some time; and she had no relative or friend on earth save the gaoler—her father.

I before said that the lieutenant spoke French uncommonly well; and thus he was enabled to make himself agreeable to the young French girl. Spirits were not allowed in the prison; but as she was commissioned to purchase provision for the lieutenant's table, she managed to smuggle in as much brandy and real Dunkirk gin as we required, unknown to her father, who was in the habit of searching every basket that was taken into the prison, save his daughter's.

I had often heard tough yarns spun on board o' ship about the extremes to which lovers will go in behalf of those they adore; and I had read similar tales in books; but I had never bestowed much credit upon either up to the time of which I am speaking. I however soon changed my opinion; and it is my duty to tell a terrible tale, which I never recollect without a shudder.

About eight or ten months passed away, and we saw no chance of

obtaining our liberty. The war continued to rage with unabated violence ; and although, by the aid of Fifine, we had attempted to escape from the prison a great number of times, something always arrived to frustrate our schemes and thwart our plans. The French soldiers, who were on guard round the gaol, were proof against bribery ; and the gaoler himself was incorruptible. But the spirits of the lieutenant were sinking beneath this long confinement ; and his health was speedily affected by the same causes. Fifine, who was devotedly attached to him, and who probably cherished the hope of becoming his wife in case he obtained his liberty, was resolved to effect his escape by some means or another ; indeed her attachment to the lieutenant was more powerful in the young maiden's bosom than her filial love.

God only knows whether her motives were really as thoroughly bad as many have supposed them to have been ; or whether accident, resulting from trepidation or ignorance, produced the sad catastrophe. It is however certain, that she one evening impregnated her father's cup, at supper-time, with laudanum ; and that the result was the almost immediate death of the unfortunate man. Fifine was in a state of mind more easily fancied than described. She called God to witness the truth of her asseveration that she had only intended to throw her father into a deep sleep, by which she should have advised us to profit and secure our escape. What was to be done ? We were in a dreadful dilemma, and the lieutenant himself was almost distracted. To remain in prison was to meet the fate of murderers : to attempt an escape would have been cruel in the extreme without taking Fifine with us. Short was the time we had for deliberation : our position admitted not of delay in our operations ; and it was at length agreed that we should leave the prison. Before we started, the lieutenant arranged the plan of proceedings ; and when the matter was settled, we boldly walked out of the gaol, to the number of six, accompanied by Fifine.

The sentinels, seeing us with the gaoler's daughter, fancied that an order had arrived for our discharge, and did not ask any questions as we issued into the street. When we were beyond their view, we separated from each other, the lieutenant and Fifine remaining together.

I before said that everything had been previously arranged, in reference to the line of conduct we had to pursue. Fifine conducted the lieutenant to an old French sailor who owned a large boat ; and a considerable bribe did the rest. The boat was got out of the harbour and rowed round to a certain spot on the sands between Dunkirk and Gravelines ; and that spot was the point of rendezvous for us all. We had managed to get out of the town along the sands ; and at about one o'clock in the morning, had succeeded in meeting once more. We did not tarry long before we embarked on board the boat, and when day dawned, the towers of Dunkirk were but small specks in the horizon. At length to our joy, an English cutter hove in sight ; we made straight for her, and were received on board. The old sailor and his two sons, who had accompanied us, were liberally rewarded, and they left us, with many kind wishes for our prosperous return to our own country.

As long as the mind of Fifine had been actively engaged in the plans and dangers of the night, she had had but little time for reflection. When, however, she was safe on board the cutter, her imagination

reviewed the terrible occurrence of the preceding evening, and she wept bitterly as she contemplated the deed of which she had been the authoress. I also believe that the lieutenant himself was at a loss how he should dispose of the young girl on his anticipated arrival in England; for he was a man of the strictest honour: but he was thoughtful and moody, and I did not dare intrude upon him with impertinent questions. The crew of the cutter, which had taken us on board, was made acquainted with just so much as we chose to tell them of the transactions to which we owed our liberty; and of course the real truth was not suspected.

But no one had much time for either grief or joy after the departure of the boat that had enabled us to escape from France. Scarcely had we been on board an hour, when a sail was descried astern, and a large schooner hove in sight. In five minutes more, another vessel, of the same class, and carrying equal weight of metal, appeared on our larboard tack. They wore French colours, and turned out to be privateers from Calais.

"I know that craft well," said the master who commanded the cutter, indicating the schooner which appeared first: "she belongs to one of the smartest seamen in the channel, and tough work we shall have with her. She has carried upwards of five or six prizes into port within the last month. Her captain used to command a packet between Dover and Calais; and he no more fears the enemy than he does the worst sea."

At this moment the schooner fired a gun to bring us to; and seeing that it was impossible to get off, we tacked about and prepared for action. In a few minutes we were surrounded in smoke—the splinters and balls flew about on all sides—and our mast was shot away at the very commencement of the action. We, however, rigged a spar in a very few minutes, and by manœuvring and tacking about were enabled to do the schooner a good deal of mischief. The battle with the brig was nothing to this: we fought like desperate men, whom a terrible fate seemed to await, if we were captured. Those on board, who had tasted of captivity in a foreign land, had no wish to return to it; and the original crew of the cutter had heard enough from us to urge them to make a desperate resistance. The screams of the unhappy Fifine mingled with the roar of the cannon and the shouts of the men; for the poor girl knew that nothing but a scaffold awaited her, if she were conveyed back to her native shore. The lieutenant did all he could to pacify her; but the awful prospect before her seemed to deprive her of the courage which during the previous night had mainly contributed to our escape. The fore-mast of the privateer was shot away, and she was otherwise so disabled that she judged it prudent to sheer off for a few minutes, and prepare to renew the action. The master was in high glee when he observed the Frenchman's manœuvres, and he still hoped to be enabled to escape the second vessel, which was however coming fast down upon us. But we could not crowd much canvas on our jury-mast, and we saw that another skirmish was inevitable. Half an hour passed away in this state of uncertainty, during which Fifine at one moment gave way to the wildest paroxysms of her grief, and at another seemed to indulge in the brightest hopes. The lieutenant evidently felt much and deeply

for the state of mind in which he saw the unfortunate girl who had dared so much for him.

The second privateer exchanged a signal with the schooner that we had so successfully disabled, and we perceived that she came straight down upon us, bent on mischief. We were not however disheartened. Our success hitherto had cheered our spirits, and we resolved upon continuing the desperate resistance we had commenced.

A second action began; and as you may suppose, it was anything but equal. We could not manœuvre with our jury-mast as we had done at first when engaged with the former vessel; and thus the very lightness of our craft, which had before so much befriended us, was now the greatest of our disadvantages. Had we suffered the large schooner to have come along side of us, she would have blown us, as it were, out of the water. We were however determined to fight to the last; but the action was concluded by a misfortune which had nothing to do with our courage. Ammunition failed us; and we had no alternative but to strike!

Fifine ran from one to the other, in an agony of the wildest despair, such as I had never seen before. Even in the din and bustle of a surrender, tears came into the eyes of many of the rough seamen to whom she made an appeal which few of them however understood.

The last broad-side from the enemy's ship had so completely disabled our little craft, that we found she was rapidly filling; and it was only by the greatest exertions, that the Frenchmen kept her afloat, while we got on board their vessel, and while they ransacked everything they could find. At length she was abandoned to her fate, and we saw her go down, as the two schooners tacked about, and sailed for Calais.

In a very short time, the towers of the church and the town-hall broke upon our sight, and we again saw a prison in the horizon. The lieutenant was walking up and down the deck, endeavouring to console Fifine. He had now made up his mind to state the whole truth to the French captain, and throw himself upon that officer's mercy—for those privateers are very good fellows in their way; when she suddenly caught sight of the French coast. She uttered one wild—long scream—it rings in my ears at this moment—grasped convulsively the hand of the man for whom she had dared everything—and threw herself from the gang-way into the sea!

A boat was immediately lowered and manned—but long before it left the vessel, the lieutenant had leapt from the stern, and was swimming towards the unhappy girl who had thus sought a premature grave. With what anxiety did we watch him from the deck! She rose once—and he was within a yard of her; he made a desperate effort to catch hold of her clothes, but she sank before he could reach her: she rose again at a little distance—he turned—she sank—he dived—we shouted to encourage him—the boat drew near—but he came up alone, exhausted and fatigued, and fainted as soon as he was dragged into the boat. From that moment Fifine was never seen more!

Mr. Darling had scarcely brought his affecting anecdote to a conclusion, when a visitor was announced, and that mysterious individual—



12/1/00



whom Somerville had accosted in Saint Paul's Church-yard, and who had afterwards conversed with Grace and her father opposite the Post-Office, entered the room.

"You have not yet departed," he began, unceremoniously throwing himself upon a chair; "that is fortunate! I lost a ring—a very precious jewel—yesterday, while we were talking together, and it did not strike me till this morning where I noticed it last. I remember I had it on my finger —"

"I found *that* ring, Sir," interrupted Darling; "you must have dropped it when drawing off your glove to take a letter from your pocket."

"Ah! this is fortunate again," exclaimed the stranger; "I would not lose *that* ring for treble its value. It has an utility about it which does not meet every eye."

Mr. Darling related those particulars connected with the transfer of the ring to Somerville, which the reader is already acquainted with; and the individual, whom the circumstance seemed most intimately to concern, walked up and down the room for some time in the greatest agitation.

"Accursed fatality!" murmured Stanley—for he of course the reader has already guessed the stranger to be—"a thousand maledictions be upon the wretched bauble!" he added bitterly; then suddenly turning to Darling, he questioned him relative to the manner of Mrs. Somerville and her husband when the ring was placed in their care.

The behaviour of Eliza was communicated to him who had so deeply wronged her; and he again paced the apartment with uneven steps. Grace and her father were silent but astonished spectators of his emotions.

"After all," said Stanley, aloud, "the harm is not so great. No use could be made of the ring in *that* quarter, against me; and another is speedily procured."

He was about to depart, when Grace modestly observed that she hoped he had not forgotten his promise relative to the nature of the contents of that letter which was entrusted to her father, and which had been sent, as the reader will remember, the night before.

"No—Miss Darling," was the reply; "I have not broken my word. The letter will be found as satisfactory as you can desire, or as I, under present circumstances, could make it."

"This declaration that your promise has been kept," said Grace, "has taken a considerable load off my mind. You will pardon my importunity—my interference in behalf of ——"

"Make no apology," hastily interrupted Stanley; "none is necessary."

And he took a hasty leave of Grace and her father, evidently anxious to avoid a conversation the topic of which was by no means agreeable to him.

CHAPTER XVI.

SOMERVILLE RECEIVES A LITTLE FARTHER INITIATION INTO THE INTENTIONS AND WAYS OF DOCTOR WOKENSMITHERS.—HE BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH A GENTLEMAN WHO DRAWS HIS HOROSCOPE.—THE WARD OF INCURABLES.—THE JOURNAL OF AN ENGLISHMAN.

SOMERVILLE awoke at about nine o'clock, and found the Doctor standing by his bed-side. For some time he was unable to collect his ideas into a sufficiently narrow compass to facilitate the remembrance of all that had passed during the night; but at length he separated vision from reality, and shuddered as he called to mind the treatment to which he felt convinced some female had been subjected at the hands of the two ruffians who seemed to enjoy an irresponsible executive authority in the establishment.

"I hope you have passed a good night?" said the Doctor, when Somerville had had time to take a survey of the apartment, and assure himself that he was labouring under no delusion, but that he was really in a mad-house.

"Doctor Wokensmithers," cried the young man, "if I be not already mad, this house will effectually make me so."

"This house!" ejaculated the Doctor; "why—have *you* any complaint to make against this house?" added the Doctor, with considerable emphasis upon the pronoun.

"Not as yet," returned Somerville, doggedly; "but I should not be surprised if my turn were to come."

"Oh! no," hastily rejoined Wokensmithers; "they pay two hundred a-year for you."

"Who pays?" demanded Somerville. "And do you mean to insinuate that those alone are entitled to Christian treatment, who are enabled to satisfy your avarice?"

The young man forgot, in the heat of the indignation into which the reminiscence of the transactions of the night had thrown him, that he himself ought to maintain the most guarded system of behaviour, in order to place his designs of escape beyond the chance of frustration.

"I tell you what, Somerville," said the Doctor, suddenly changing his tone and manner from the most exquisite politeness into brutal roughness, "don't attempt to interfere in anything you see or hear in this house. No one will molest you. I suppose you heard that girl's screams last night, did you?"

"They must have been deaf as the dead, who could not hear those terrible appeals to human mercy," returned Somerville, with a visible shudder.

"I dare say she won't trouble us long," said Wokensmithers, in a low tone of voice, which however was still rough and brutal: "but if you intend to hear her every time we find it necessary to chastise her, why—I must change your room, that's all."

"Is she about to leave you?" enquired Somerville, alarmed by this threat, but not daring to exhibit his fears.

"Leave us—oh! to be sure," said the Doctor.

"Poor creature! probably, if she were to return to her friends, they might take care of her!" observed the young man.

"Friends, indeed!" cried the Doctor, with a satirical laugh. "Who the devil has friends? I have no friends. You have no friends. No one has friends."

"Then to whom is she going?" asked Somerville, considerably interested in the fate of the unhappy maniac, whom he had not however seen otherwise than through the darkness of the night.

"To whom is she going?" echoed the Doctor. "Why, do you really think she can hold out much longer?"—and having thus partially explained his meaning, the wretch turned upon his heel, and left the room; telling Somerville that breakfast would be prepared in the apartment below when he chose to partake of it.

He rose, dressed himself, and descended to the parlour, where he found the five individuals, in whose society he had supped the preceding evening, and the Doctor, at breakfast. He endeavoured to appear as animated and as cheerful as possible, in order to avert any suspicion relative to his plan of escape; and he found the Doctor as civil and polite as when he first saw him. One thing he was very desirous of ascertaining—and that was, whether Wokensmithers himself really thought that he was mad; or whether the Doctor had been imposed upon by false representations. He could not however bring round the conversation to the topic which was likely to procure the gratification of his curiosity; for the Doctor invariably turned the discourse to other subjects.

Little worthy of record occurred at the breakfast-table. The politician ate a very diminutive portion of bread, as he declared that in consequence of the oppressive nature of the corn-laws, no man could possibly have more than a small quantity of that article at one meal: the lawyer threatened to prosecute the Doctor's milk-man for selling bad eggs, and commenced a long train of argument to prove that it was a species of felony: the slave-owner drank no sugar in his tea, because it was originally cultivated by the unhappy blacks: the clergyman told the Doctor that he was "an unclean vessel" for partaking of the "flesh-pots of Egypt" at his morning's repast, thereby alluding to the vigorous attacks which Wokensmithers was making upon a mighty round of beef: and the false witness would drink nothing but water, for fear of having brandy put into his tea or coffee, as he had been previously thrown into a state of intoxication when he was induced to receive the bribe which made him swear away the reputation of the most injured of women.

After breakfast, the Doctor informed Somerville that he was at liberty to walk about the house, or into the garden, at his pleasure, provided he conducted himself in an orderly and quiet manner. This permission was readily acted upon by Somerville, who was eager for an opportunity to reconnoitre the premises, in order to render the circumstances of his meditated evasion the less perilous. His first care was to examine the yard at the back of the house; and he found that the scheme, which had hastily passed through his mind on the previous evening, when he surveyed the locality from his window, was the most eligible he could think of. The door of the out-house was open; the female had evidently been

removed back again into the main building, at an early hour that morning ; but he shuddered when he marked the hard red bricks with which the floor of the shed was paved, and recollect ed the violence of the concussion when she was flung upon the ground by the Doctor's satellites.

While he was thus occupied in examining the premises, he was accosted by a tall, thin, gaunt individual, shabbily dressed, and wearing an enormous wig under an exceedingly small hat. He carried a quantity of papers in his hand, and behind his right ear was a pen, stuck there in that manner which is frequently adopted by clerks and men of business in the City. He was probably forty-five or forty-six years of age ; and his countenance wore an expression of thoughtfulness and melancholy, although his eyes were vivacious and sparkling.

"Good morning, Sir," said this individual, accosting Somerville, who took him for a clerk or some other functionary in the employment of Doctor Wokensmithers. "I see you are making yourself acquainted with the premises of your new abode. The day is propitious for a ramble ; and though we may expect some foggy weather—the Moon being in her last quarter at forty-five minutes past four this morning—you need not carry an umbrella with you."

"That would be doubly useless," returned Somerville ; "seeing that the compass of my liberty does not extend a hundred yards in any direction."

"True—true—I forgot that," cried the individual with the papers. "The Zodiacial Configurations are invariably opposed to me at this period of the month. The Estival is the quarter that suits me best ; and although the Lady Venus be now upon the ascendant and high on the culminating arc, the domal dignity of my own peculiar constellation is not on the same cusp."

Somerville stood in stupid astonishment at the individual who uttered this tirade with the greatest composure in the world, and whom he began to suspect was something else in the establishment besides clerk or stipendiary assistant.

"What is your horoscope ?" continued the individual : and without waiting for a reply, he added, "Because I will draw it for you ;"—and taking a stick from a bundle of fire-wood that lay in one corner of the yard, he began making lines and describing circles upon the ground. "There," said he, when he had completed a square, "that is the first House. *Introitus Solis in Punctum Arietis Primum.* Your age I suppose is ———"

"Two-and-twenty," said Somerville, by way of humouring the astrological speculator.

"Very well," proceeded that person ; "and in what month were you born ?"

"November," was the answer,

"Ah ! *Aquarius*, I dare say. Well, what have we now ?" cried the fortune-telling lunatic, scrawling all kinds of figures upon the ground. "Mars and Venus are within orbs of a conjunction ; the Moon and Mercury are in Quartile ; Uranus is in Trine with Mercury and in opposition to Jupiter. This position of the heavenly bodies is unfortunate ; and although you are born to be a king or some great personage, I am very much afraid that revolutions and domestic commotions will trouble your peace of mind."

In spite of the miseries that surrounded him, and his anxiety respecting his wife, Somerville was almost inclined to burst out into a loud fit of laughter at this statement of his destinies : he however contained himself, and the astrologer proceeded to unroll his papers.

" You see," said he, addressing himself to Somerville with the utmost solemnity, " that this Almanack is the result of ten years' research, reflection, and study. It contains a guide to the weather for the next half century."

Somerville cast his eye carelessly over the pages which the other displayed with the utmost importance, and saw that the almanack consisted of the usual calendar, with the words " Squally," " Fine," " Rain," " Wind," " Stormy," &c., &c., appended to the different days, according to the conceit of the writer.

" This wonderful discovery," observed the lunatic, is calculated to benefit the whole world. The study of meteorology is as yet in its infancy ; it has been reserved to me to extend the knowledge of the science, and, at the same time, to propagate the truths of Astrology."

" But how is it possible to calculate the weather to so distant a day ? " enquired Somerville.

" How is it possible ? " echoed the lunatic. " I will explain it to you. By observing the relative position of the heavenly bodies, at various times, to the earth, we arrive at the most important results. Suppose the earth to-day be in the exact relative position to the heavenly bodies as it was, for instance, fifty years ago ; the weather on these coincidental days will be the same. It therefore remains to ascertain the state of the weather for each day during the last century, discover the various positions of the earth in relation to the other planets for each day in the coming century, and a judicious comparison will put us in possession of the truth."

" There is certainly method in this madness," thought Somerville within himself ; and, impelled by curiosity, he turned to the page on which that day of the month was registered, with the accompanying intimation of the state of the weather. " I see that you prophecy foggy weather for this day," said Somerville ; " and I am afraid that we shall have rain."

" My dear Sir," cried the man vehemently, " I have not expended the last ten years of my life to no purpose. I tell you that the result of my calculations has never yet failed ; and you will see, notwithstanding the clouded state of the heavens, that there will be no rain—but plenty of fog."

" I will not dispute the point with you," observed Somerville ; and no sooner were the words out of his mouth, than one of those sudden showers, which frequently fall like a whole mass of water discharged at once without the previous warning of a smaller rain, chased him into the house.

The astrologer would not however believe that it was actually raining. Somerville earnestly advised him to seek refuge in the passage ; but he was obstinate in his assertions that his monitor was mistaken, and persisted in standing out in the middle of the yard, under the firm impression that it was not raining.

" You will get wet through," urged Somerville.

" It does not rain," cried the lunatic.

" It falls in torrents, I tell you," exclaimed Frederick.

"It's only a fog, I can assure you," persisted the astrologer, from whose large wig and shoulders the water fell in a thousand streams.

"For heaven's sake come in," said Somerville, after another pause; "you will catch your death with cold."

"Fog never hurt me," cried the lunatic.

But at this instant, Messrs. Benjamin and Joseph happened to pass along the passage, the door of which opened into the yard; and those respectable gentlemen caught sight of the astrologer, who was literally drenched to the skin, stuck bolt upright, with his nose in the air, in the middle of the yard. They accordingly pounced upon the unfortunate scientific man in a moment, and prepared to drag him into the building.

"Now then," cried Joe, "what's all this gammon about?"

"Mercury is on the cusp of the ascendant," replied the astrologer.

"Cusp of the devil!" exclaimed Ben. "Don't be up to your old games agin: but take care and eclipse yourself at once."

"Leave me alone," shouted the astrologer; "you are an opaque body passing between me and that new planet" (pointing to Somerville) "which has just appeared in our sphere. The mutual aspects of your egress are not of a friendly nature."

Ben did not think it necessary to reason any longer with the obstinate astrologer: he accordingly seized him by the collar, on one side, and Joseph did the same on the other; and by their united exertions the unfortunate man was hauled into the passage. Here his rage became perfectly ungovernable; he stamped, swore, and foamed at the mouth, declaring that a base conspiracy had been concocted to defeat his scientific researches, and vowing that as soon as Mars should be on the ascendant he would knock the two ruffians down with the tail of the large comet.

"Open the door of the 'Incurables,' Ben," cried Joe, alluding to the Ward allotted to those unhappy men.

The door of a room communicating with the passage was thrown open, and Somerville perceived that it was the dirty and gloomy stone-paved apartment he had passed through on the preceding evening, when it was empty, as the lunatics who occupied it in the day-time had been removed to their beds. He now stepped in with the myrmidons of the Doctor to take a view of the place; and the first object that met his eyes was the young man who had stolen the chicken bone the night before. He was now chained to the wall; and the moment he perceived his keepers, he commenced the most hideous howling and screaming that ever fell upon Somerville's ears.

The windows of this room were secured with massive iron bars; and the appearance of the place was altogether one of wretchedness and horror. There was no fire in the cheerless grate; and one or two of the inmates were half naked, it being the particular amusement of some of them to tear their clothes to pieces. All the lunatics in this apartment had their heads shaven; and when Somerville cast a glance towards the astrologer, whose form had been suddenly invested with the strait-waistcoat, he perceived that he had been robbed of his immense wig, and that his pate was now as bald as the sculls of the others.

There were probably ten or a dozen individuals in this miserable abode. One was amusing himself in weaving straw into a thousand fantastic

shapes; another was scrawling figures upon a wall with a piece of charcoal; a third, who fancied himself to be the Grand Seignior, was squatted upon the ground with his legs crossed under him like a Turk, and puffing away at a long stick with as much relish as if it were a real pipe; a fourth imagined himself to be a woman in labour, and rolled about on the floor apparently in the most excruciating agonies; a fifth had perched himself upright against the wall, and, under the agreeable impression that he was a pump, kept working his right arm up and down with amazing velocity and regularity of motion; a sixth believing himself to be an organ, imitated that instrument as well as he could with his voice; a seventh, supposing that he had been wounded in battle, stood all day upon one leg, with the perfect conviction that the other had been cut off; an eighth, imagining himself to be a garden-roller, kept turning over and over up and down the room; and the last, thinking that he was dead, lay stretched upon the floor, motionless and silent from morning to night, with his arms and legs arranged just as if he had been laid out. The maniac, who had stolen the bone, and those individuals who tore their clothes, composed the remainder of this precious category of Incurable. The ebullitions of their madness in the most noisy and dangerous freaks, compelled the Doctor to keep them locked up in the Ward together; for even the dead man, the pump, and the garden-roller, gave very frequent and evident signs of animation and life.

Somerville turned away from the scene with tears in his eyes; for especially painful is human degradation, when the loss of intellect is accompanied by those efforts of a disordered imagination which are calculated to excite laughter and ridicule! He retired to his own room to seek an opportunity of pondering upon his plans at his ease; but his mind was unsettled and anxious. A fire had been lighted in his chamber by the Doctor's order, and he seated himself before it; it was however in vain that he endeavoured to compose himself: the beloved wife, with whom he could not correspond—his projects of vengeance—his present incarceration—and his anticipated escape, all furnished ideas and thoughts that crowded simultaneously upon his imagination. He seemed as if he were reading a dozen different books at the same moment; and he rose and paced the apartment with agitated steps. At length his eye rested upon a cupboard in one corner of the room; and a vague undefined sentiment of curiosity prompted him to examine it. A bundle of papers lay concealed in a dark nook at the bottom of the cupboard: Somerville drew them forth, and perceived that the contents were a Journal in manuscript. Pleased at having thus discovered something to wile away the time, which hung so heavily upon his hands, he seated himself once more before the fire, and perused the following narrative:—

JOURNAL OF AN ENGLISHMAN.

September 25th, 1832.

It is thus, my dear Alfred, that you abandon me in a moment when your advice would have been so necessary, and when your former counsels have caused me to sacrifice my dearest hopes on the altar of prudence: 'tis thus that you leave the shores of England, and hasten to the western world. If, at least, your letters could arrive each week to inspire me with courage, and to assist me to persevere, I should imagine myself

less unhappy. But they will only reach me at long intervals, and after an unsupportable delay. Immense seas separate us: you will soon inhabit another continent.

Ah! if you knew how much it has cost me to break off my connexion with Augusta. Poor Augusta! She was obliged to obey a father's cruel mandates, and renounce an attachment that neither time nor change can obliterate: and during my absence she espoused another. And I, yielding to the entreaties of my relatives and friends—and perhaps from motives of spite—shall unite my destinies to one who still is not Augusta!

To you I will confess all! Twenty times during my last conversation with Augusta, I was on the point of inwardly swearing to break off my marriage with Julia; and perhaps I should have done it; but on a sudden, awakening from a predicament of despair, Augusta was armed with unnatural courage—a courage that I had not,

"I love you better than life, Edward," she said; "be happy! I am already married;—may you find felicity in the society of another!"

I then gave her back the letters which she had written to me during the first year of our attachment; and at the same time, I solicited mine.

"Never—never!" was her emphatic reply; and in a few moments, without having previously expressed her intention, she committed to the flames all the letters I had ever sent her.

I shall not see Augusta again! Her husband who has been absent for two days, will return to night; and you well know that my presence at —— will arouse jealous suspicions in his breast. He has been informed of our affection;—I shall therefore depart forthwith for the mansion of her whom I must now call my affianced bride!

September 27th.

I have seen Julia again! She is a lovely girl—fair and delicate—with auburn hair, and a smile expressive of innocence and candour. Her parents arranged this meeting with considerable ceremony and useless solemnity!

It is indeed singular, that one may to-day be amongst individuals hitherto unknown, and may be called to-morrow by the name of Brother, Father, Wife, or Son, as circumstances determine!

My destined bride! she is a being whose affections will be entirely devoted to me: she will become my faithful companion in good or in evil fortune—an associate from whom death alone must separate me.

Alfred, you are wiser than I—I am not ashamed to acknowledge the superiority of your talents; you love me as much as one can love a friend: it is you, then, that principally advised me to contract this marriage; and if I thence reap the felicity you promise, to you alone shall I be grateful.

The same Day. Ten o'clock at night.

After supper I had a long conversation with Julia. She has not an extensive knowledge—but her ideas on the subjects she is skilled in are correct. Her imagination is the seat of purity: her mind is as chaste as the snow on which the foot may imprint the mark it chooses; and her disposition is as affectionate as that of a child who has never been sepa-

rated from its mother. Thus she has received an education rather solid and profound than brilliant and attractive.

This conversation with her has partially cheered me. Yes—my dear friend, I begin to perceive that you were right. A quiet and unvarying scene of felicity—unshaken—uninterrupted,—peace—quiet,—and the presence of a wife who will lavish with sweet profusion her tenderness upon me—and a smile ever ready to welcome me—this is something ; but it is not Augusta. It is not an ideal paradise, the very impossibility of the existence of which made me more arduous and fanatical in its pursuit : it is still a real Elysium.

September 28th. Four o'clock in the morning.

I have slept, Alfred—I have slept tranquilly until this moment ; and I awoke with a pleasing internal serenity, such as I have seldom yet experienced in my life. The image of Julia—the portrait of that amiable girl is ever present in my memory : it pours balm into all my former wounds.

I shall see her presently—see her—meet her anon—never more to leave her !

September 29th. Six o'clock in the evening.

Oh ! yes—you said truly, I may still be happy. Until now I had only sought for happiness in those haunts—in those places, where I could not encounter even its vestiges. Blasphemer that I was, I said, “Happiness does not exist !”

Yes—I am happy ! I possess a wife, pure as angels—beautiful as the opening flowers of May ; and in the course of coming years I may have sons who, with their sweet voices and infantive accents, shall welcome me with the name of FATHER !

At this moment she is completing her toilet : we shall soon ramble together in the meadows surrounding her father's mansion.

We shall be alone together—alone with nature and her sublime beauties. A smile—a sigh—a look—a single pressure of the hand, will be sufficient to convey from one to the other the electricity of our thoughts.

The joy, which I used to feel in the presence of Augusta, was maddening, passionate, uneasy, and mingled with sorrow. But in the society of a wife, Alfred—Oh ! you cannot divine the perfection of that joy !

September 30th.

I am alone in my chamber—in my bed. Is it a dream that thus disturbed me ?

Yes—a terrible dream !

Fool that I am ! can it be aught but a dream ? Such a complication of miseries is impossible—altogether impossible !

I dreamt, Alfred—that I was walking with my wife—with Julia : I had never seen a finer evening—I had never beheld a more cloudless sky ; and Julia leant gaily upon my arm.

As we were standing on the bank of the river, all on a sudden I saw something white floating upon the waters—shapeless—indistinct—distant. It came nearer—it was the corpse of a woman—of Augusta !

Yes—it was a terrible dream !

I reflected in that moment that Augusta had probably seen me with my bride, and drowned herself in despair. A convulsive rage—an in-

explicable indignation influenced my mind : my eyes saw not—my ears heard not, save a species of ringing in them. I seized—I grasped with force something warm at my side—I harshly pressed in strong arms that delicate object. I heard a dismal cry—and a heavy weight fell into the river!

I thought I had avenged the self-inflicted death of Augusta.

Then I was surrounded by a shuddering crowd—and all stared upon me with looks of horror. I resisted the attacks of several individuals that endeavoured to seize me. They bound me—I passed through an immense multitude—at the same time they bore before me two dead bodies on a bier—Augusta and Julia!

Yes—it was a terrible dream!

They told me that Augusta, being with her husband on the bank of the river, saw me and my lovely bride walking together, and plunged into the wave, before any one could save her. They told me that I had been the death of Julia. All around me is in disorder—dirty—filthy—dismal—and revolting. My clothes are torn—immense bars of iron are at my window, and my door.

Great God! 'tis not a dream!

January 1864, 1833. Midnight.

Oh! no—'twas not a dream!

This day I was tried for murder—for the murder of my wife! They put questions to me which I did not understand—my friends cried, wept, and conversed around me—and some reproached me for my apathy. Apathy! what had I to care for? They whom I loved—Augusta and Julia, both were gone—and I was left behind them! My friends talked to me of disgrace; I answered with a laugh of scorn. They recommended me to pray; I blasphemed. They advised me to make my peace with man; I said that I had not offended him!

I recollect that the lawyers, who were provided for me, spoke in extenuation of what they called my crime; and then I remember it was argued that I was a mad-man.

A mad-man! The judge spared my life from the scaffold, to condemn the remainder of my days to the miseries of a mad-house!

“ And it was probably in this room,” thought Somerville, as he thus brought the singular Journal to a conclusion, “ that the wretched man breathed his last! How many more may render up their parting sighs in this accursed den !”

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. TWILL IS INDUCED TO PRESIDE AT A RACKET MATCH.—AN INTERESTING DISPUTE BETWEEN A GREAT PHYSICIAN AND A SMALL MAN.—THE KING'S BENCHER.—MR. JOHN PLUMMERS IS AGAIN INTRODUCED TO THE READER.—MRS. WOKENSMITHERS.

We took leave of Mr. Slapman Twill when Mr. Twill himself took leave of Mr. John Plummers. We shall now return to Mr. Twill, at the mo-

ment when he has slept off the effects of Mr. Plummers' punch, and has asto down to breakfast.

Mr. Twill had not quite vacated his couch twenty minutes by his own watch, when a knock at the door fell upon his ears, and Mr. Sillyman rushed into the room.

" My dear sir," said that great newspaper-proprietor, out of whose waistcoat pocket stuck one half of an unpaid printer's bill, " I am so delighted to have found you up, you don't know. We want your services to-day above everything."

" In what way?" enquired Mr. Twill, exceedingly alarmed lest the visitor was about to ask him to write the leading article for the next *Flambeau*.

" As umpire at a racket-match," explained Mr. Charles Sillyman, with a look bearing considerable affinity to the first two syllables of his name.

" When is it to be played?" demanded Mr. Twill.

" In an hour or so," was the reply. " The Reverend Alfred Swiggle and Jerry Hewitt are the principals. Of course you'll not refuse to be umpire."

" Certainly not," said Mr. Twill. " I shall accept the office with the greatest pleasure."

" Then I tell you what," observed Mr. Sillyman, after an instant's reflection, " you do things in such a devilish off-hand, gentlemanly, slap-up manner, I don't mind if I stand a bowl of punch in the evening."

" Are the stakes heavy?" asked Mr. Twill, who did not see the necessity of answering this last inducement to his acceptance of authority.

" Very," said Mr. Sillyman. " Thirty shillings a side in money, and two gallons of beer in liquor. That's doing the thing handsome, is it not?"

" You are certainly the best judge of that," answered Mr. Twill. " Every thing goes by comparison; and as you have been a longer inmate in the Bench than I——"

" Thank God, I have!" cried Mr. Sillyman: " and that's the reason I'm up to a thing or two. Why—do you suppose that any one would have started the *Flambeau* if I had not?"

Mr. Twill certainly did not imagine that any one would have been so venturesome; and he expressed himself accordingly. Mr. Sillyman appeared very much pleased with that which was at least a dubious compliment; and Mr. Twill, having by this time finished his breakfast, intimated his readiness to accompany that gentleman to the racket-ground. Thither they accordingly hastened; and Mr. Jeremiah Hewitt was introduced to Mr. Twill.

The Reverend Alfred Swiggle had already fortified himself and his courage with a couple of draughts, *alias* pots, of porter; and, having borrowed a pair of suitable trousers from one of his friends, a clean shirt from another, and a few shillings from all, he declared himself ready for the engagement. Mr. Hewitt, who embellished a Guernsey jacket, or was embellished by it, drank cold brandy and water, perspired most dreadfully, and swore, with a terrible imprecation against his eyes and limbs, that he was never cooler in his life.

Mr. Twill took a seat facing the first Racket-Ground, and the other

gentlemen—*lucus à non lucendo*—crowded near him. Messrs. Swiggle and Hewitt then repaired to the scene of action, and the game began.

"Out!" cried one of Mr. Swiggle's friends, in reference to Mr. Hewitt's first ball.

"No such thing," shouted one on the other side.

"I say it was," cried a third.

"I say it wasn't," bawled a fourth.

"Which was it, umpire?" demanded a fifth.

"Out, certainly," decided Mr. Twill.

"I don't believe it," roared Mr. Hewitt's friends.

"Hear what the umpire says," retorted Mr. Swiggle's supporters.

"D—n the umpire!" exclaimed a Hewittite.

"You be d—d yourself," cried a Swiggleite.

Order was at length restored; and the game proceeded.

"Did you ever see such a disorderly set in your life?" enquired Mr. Sillyman of Mr. Twill.

"Never," answered that gentleman.

"For twopence I would show them all up in the next number of the *Flambeau*," observed Mr. Sillyman, glancing around him very fiercely, whereat two small boys, connected with the racket-ground, laughed prodigiously.

"You had better show *them* up, old fellow," cried Mr. Luffey, who had overheard the above conversation.

"Who?" demanded Mr. Sillyman.

"The boys," answered Mr. Samuel Luffey; and Mr. Moffatt, who came up at the moment, joined Mr. Luffey in a prolonged cachinnation at the journalist's expense.

"I'll bet you an even sovereign on the result of this game," cried Dr. Twoynont to Mr. Mopus; for the Doctor invariably showed himself within the walls of the prison when any thing in the shape of betting, gambling, or drinking was going on.

"Done," said Mopus; and the two gentlemen watched the game with the utmost anxiety.

"There, you've lost, Doctor," ejaculated Mr. Moffatt, "if you're on Swiggle's side."

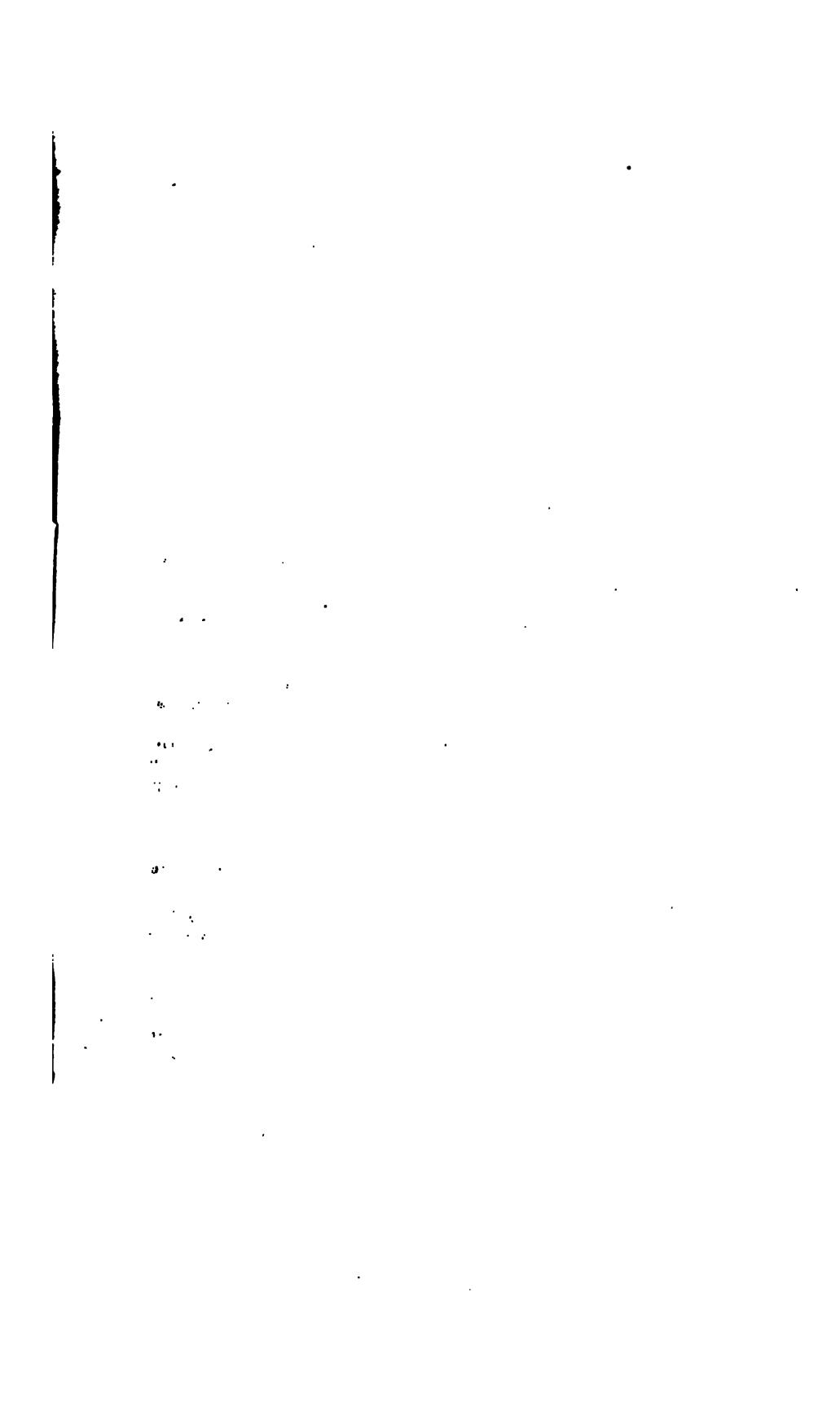
"Yes—he is," cried Mr. Mopus, looking round to catch a glimpse of the venerable physician; but for some minutes the Doctor was nowhere to be seen.

At length Mr. Mopus caught sight of him near the Coffee House, and hastened to demand the sovereign which he had won. But the Doctor was warmly engaged in a dispute with a short and shabby individual, who was very much prone to the letting out of furniture to the inmates of the Bench, and to be excessively insolent when he could not obtain the money for the hire of his articles.

"I tell you," cried the Doctor, "I know nothing about the counter-pane and blanket you allude to."

"Well—that is a rum go," exclaimed the little man; "here's a feller as won't neither give me up my blenkits nor tell me wot he has done with 'em. If he'd only fork out the ticket, I 'ouldn't care."

"The ticket!" shouted the Doctor, brandishing his stick in the deepest indignation.





"I say, what's the matter?"

"Yes, the ticket," reiterated the little man. "You knows as how you spouted all the things as you could send out of the place, ven you didn't want 'em no longer, 'cos you vent to live in the Rules. Blowed if I don't call in the Po-lice!"

"Call in whoever you like," said the Doctor: "but if you say that I pawned your things——"

"Here's the very o'man as will prove it," cried the little man; and accosting an old female who was at that moment passing through the lobby, he said, "I wish you'd just set this here gen'leman to rights, my dear, will'ee, tho'? He per-sists in declaring that he don't know nothink o'my counterpin and blenkit. I has a very shrewd suspic'en you can tell us someot about it."

"Vell, I don't care if I does speak out," returned the old woman, darting a furious look at the Doctor, "cos there's my vages due—that's thirty-six shillings, at three shillings a week for twelve weeks—and cuss me if I ever seed the colour o' his money except ven he sent me out to buy gin."

"That's right, old gal," cried Mr. Blogg, the one-armed turnkey; and he bestowed a kind and familiar wink upon the Doctor, to intimate that it was an excellent joke.

"I says vot I knows, Mr. Blogg, and I doesn't meddle with matters as doesn't consarn me," continued the old woman. "My tongue isn't gived to scandal; but I speaks the truth. So, as I vas saying, ven I vos very imperilately interrupted, I did place the articles as is missing in the care of the Doctor's uncle; and I'd vager anything short that he's got the ticket at this present speaking in his veskitt-pocket."

"Doctor, you've lost your sovereign," cried Mr. Mopus, now reminding that discomfited individual of another obligation, in order to enhance his confusion: but the Doctor prudently evaporated from the Bench as quickly as his legs could carry him, and hastened to console himself in the parlour of the Britannia Tavern opposite, where he found two tip-staves and a sheriff's-officer's follower whom he knew, and who immediately treated him to gin-and-water.

In the meantime the game continued; numerous bets were won and lost; but few were paid or received; and on various occasions the authority of the umpire was disputed in no very flattering language by those whom his decisions were against. But the occupation was a source of amusement to Mr. Twill; and as he was by this time tolerably well acquainted with the manners and peculiarities of the inmates of the Bench, he was not exceedingly annoyed when he heard his circulating fluids, optics, and immortal soul condemned to a perpetual sojourn in the regions beyond the Styx. Indeed, the behaviour and conversation of the King's Bencher are peculiar to that happy region. He seldom gives its usual name to anything which happens to have two appellations—a vulgar and a genteel one; and his similes and metaphors are as frequently drawn from animate as from inanimate Nature. Thus at one time he will express the words "shillings" and "half-crowns" by that of "tin;" and at another he uses the highly enlightened term of "yellow-boys" for "sovereigns." When told anything that he does not exactly believe, he will very quietly but elegantly observe that "it's all his eye." He even borrows figures of speech from the instruments used by artizans—

and mechanics, and frequently declares "that he is down as a hammer," or "as right as a trivet." If a man be arrested, "he is nailed at last!" and if another be stingy and prudent, he is described as a "devil of a screw." Cheating is represented as "chiselling;" and a singular personage is "a rum file."

The Bencher does not like to give an absolute refusal when a favour is solicited at his hands; but he evades assent by the ingenious method of enquiring of the person thus beseeching him, "whether he don't wish he may get it?" If a dun approach him, he puts on a solemn countenance, and quotes Scripture the better to sanctify his appearance:—"I know your necessities before you ask, and your ignorance in asking!" and, with these words, he turns upon his heel, and thus avoids farther importunity. He is very positive in his answers to certain questions, and invariably asserts that "such and such is the case, and no d—d mistake." His arguments are therefore incontrovertible and conclusive. He however occasionally misplaces words; for instance, if a very unexpected gentleman be brought in as a prisoner, he will express his conviction "that it's the queerest go he ever saw in his life;" and if another run away, he will swear that "he'd better not come that again." But King's Benchers have their failings as well as other great men; and according to their own accounts (as we observed in a former chapter) they are a race much more sinned against than sinning. We candidly confess that the assertion is somewhat paradoxical to us; but we rely with confidence upon the hope that they themselves can explain it.

The Bencher is generally a young man; but if he have a beard, it is usually of about four days' growth; and as his ablutions are like the visits of angels, few and far between, his appearance is not always the most healthy nor agreeable that can be conceived. Indeed he not unfrequently sacrifices to the Genius of Cleanliness in the barber's room where he gets himself shaved; but the modern habit of changing one's shirt and stockings at least every other day is as abhorrent to his feelings as universal suffrage and vote by ballot can possibly be to the most rigid Tory.

The Bencher himself is a Conservative, in bad habits, dirty linen, and politics. But with a strange inconsistency, which is not however without precedent in two large houses at Westminster, he reads the *Weekly Dispatch* and the *Sunday Times*.

This slight digression from the thread of our narrative will probably be pardoned on the score of the necessity of it, for the purpose of explaining a few of those peculiarities which Mr. Twill had noticed since his arrival at Spike Park, as the inmates of the Bench not unfrequently designate their abode. At length the game was brought to a termination by the total inability of the Reverend Alfred Swiggle at last to strike a single ball, on account of the injury his sight and equilibrium had sustained from the frequent applications he made to a pewter-pot, and the number of times the said pewter-pot was emptied and replenished. He was accordingly borne to his own room, amidst the imprecations of those who had wagered their coin upon his side.

The game being thus brought to a termination, the usual disputes in such cases, relative to the payment of money and the validity of the wagers, commenced. Mr. Twill therefore left the parties interested to

decide those little matters for themselves, and retired to his own room, to warm himself after the two or three hours' exposure to the cold which the task of umpire had obliged him to incur.

He had not been long alone, when his solitude was interrupted by the arrival of a visitor in the shape of Mr. John Plummers. That gentleman was no longer clad in his fustian garments: he was elegantly dressed in a complete suit of black; and his new hat was surrounded with several yards of crape. His face was very serious and solemn; but Mr. Twill was inclined to believe that this expression of countenance had only been assumed to accord with the conventional laws of decency. Mr. Plummers proceeded towards a chair, on which he seated himself; and then, after having heaved a deep sigh, vouchsafed to break silence as follows :

" My dear Twill, the old creature has gone at last. She cut her stick three days ago: but I only heard of her decease this morning ! "

" Indeed !" said Mr. Twill, who thought that a little more reverential method of conveying the fact would have better corresponded with the melancholy expression of Mr. Plummers' countenance.

" Yes," continued that gentleman, I'm an orphan now—without parents to guide and direct me. The old girl kicked the bucket without having pardoned me ! "

This reminiscence seemed to produce a considerable effect upon the mind of Mr. Plummers: he wiped his eyes with a new cambric pocket handkerchief, and shook his head very mournfully for some time.

" You are now heir to Tivey Nevitt," observed Mr. Twill.

" At last," returned Mr. Plummers; " and those scoundrels of lawyers must obey me now. I have written a letter to Snatchem and Cramp; and this is what I have said."

Mr. Plummers took a letter from his pocket, and read the contents as follows :—

" Gentlemen,—I duly received your kind communication this morning, announcing the decease of my much lamented and dearly beloved mother. As I require a great deal of ready money to pay my debts, I shall thank you to have her buried in the most economical way you can devise. A common deal coffin—poor creature! is all she can possibly require. Please to kick Mrs. Bodson out of the house the moment you receive this: she was always so attentive to my mother, and took her part. The instant the deeds are ready, send them up, and let me sign them as soon as I can; for I must get out of this horrible place in the course of the week. You need not give the servants black gloves: I am resolved to avoid all unnecessary expenses. Tell Mrs. Bodson that she must leave immediately; I will not allow her to attend the funeral of her poor dear mistress (as she calls her) indeed! I hope my revered parent's keys and papers have all been properly locked up; as I know that she was very extravagant, and used to give a great deal away to the poor, which is very unnecessary, seeing that we have Poor Laws.

" Waiting your reply, and trusting to your exactitude in fulfilling all my wishes—especially in reference to Mrs. Bodson and the deal coffin—I remain,

"Gentlemen, Your obedient humble Servant,
"JOHN PLUMMERS."

" You already begin to exercise your authority, I perceive," said Mr. Twill, when his companion, with a smile of satisfaction and triumph had brought this epistle to a conclusion.

" Certainly," returned Mr. Plummers : " I am resolved to be humbugged no longer."

Mr. Twill recollects that there was a proverb about doing to others as you would they should do to you—or some such thing; but he did not communicate the nature of his reminiscence to Mr. Plummers. Truths are apt to be severe and unpleasant; and moral aphorisms much more so—especially in the King's Bench Prison.

" Have you heard about the *Flambeau*, by the bye?" enquired Mr. Plummers after a short pause.

" No—is it defunct?" exclaimed Mr. Twill.

" Not quite," replied Mr. Plummers ; " but there has been a terrible piece of work with one of the clerks of that stupendous establishment."

" Ah! indeed!" said Mr. Twill.

" Oh! yes!" continued Mr. Plummers : " these are the particulars of the case. It appears that there was a poor devil of a fellow, named Ratten, about the premises, with a salary of fourteen shillings *per week*. The salary was however something like the graciousness of monarchs—merely nominal ; and the poor wretch was actually wanting bread. He applied to the publisher, or rather chief clerk in the office, for his money ; but no cash was forthcoming in that quarter. Ratten was starving—he had not tasted food for two days—and his lodgings were not paid for. His only prospect was the pleasant one of sleeping supperless in the street, with the kerb-stone for a mattress, and the step of the office door for a pillow. These quarters were, however, *too* good for him ; and his only alternative was to take a couple of reams of paper out of the office and raise money upon them. This he did, obtaining just the sum that was due to him ; and really, I think—under the circumstances—the fault was somewhat a venial one, especially when we take into consideration the fact that the paper was destined to be rendered useless in one way or another ; Mr. Sillyman did not however happen to have the same view of the case : the paper was missing—Mr. Ratten confessed his crime—Mr. Sillyman was made aware of the matter—and the culprit was forthwith arrested. He was had up before the Magistrate at Bow Street, and committed for trial. Nothing can now save him from transportation."

Scarcely had Mr. Plummers brought this anecdote to a conclusion when Mr. Wusted made his appearance with the satisfactory intelligence that " the same stout old lady as come afore, with a young o'man and a dog, wos a-waitin' to see if she could walk up agin." Mr. Twill returned an answer in the affirmative—Mr. Plummers took his leave—Mr. Wusted disappeared also—and Mrs. Wokensmithers and the lady's maid entered the room.

" Oh ! that awful ladder !" cried Mrs. Wokensmithers, sinking into a chair : " I really thought it was inaccessible ! Penelope, love—my salts."

" Any good newa, my dear madam ?" enquired Mr. Twill, watching the favourable opportunity to address the widow.

" Plenty of news, Slapman," returned the old lady, in a most mysterious manner. " In the first place we had all our chimneys swept this morning."



Mr. Wichenmisters

" You don't say so !" cried Mr. Twill, nearly overcome by his astonishment at the importance of this proceeding.

" We had, I assure you," persisted Mrs. Wokensmithers. " And, what is more, I received a note from my brother this morning, in which he tells me that the young Somerville, whom you assisted in his difficulties, you know—"

" Yes—what of him?" said Mr. Twill, impatiently, for he was now really interested in the widow's discourse.

" Why—that he is placed under my brother's care: but the matter is to be kept a profound secret. I did not even tell Miss Chaturbocks."

" And I wouldn't have thought of mentioning it to our footman John," observed Miss Penelope, " if he hadn't gived me his sacred word o' honor as a gentleman not to tell it again."

" That was exceedingly prudent," observed Mr. Twill, somewhat sarcastically. " But you astonish me—Somerville in a mad-house!"

" In a mad-house !" repeated Mrs. Wokensmithers. " Penelope—my *eau-de-cologne*."

" I really always suspected that there must be something exceedingly curious about that young man," said Mr. Twill. " His conversation was so mysterious—his habits so singular—his looks so wild—and his manners so reserved !"

" But the best of it is, he is not really mad," exclaimed Mrs. Wokensmithers.

" Not mad !" echoed Mr. Twill.

" No—not mad," repeated the widow: " at least so my brother tells me in his note. But all this, you know, is entirely between ourselves."

" Oh ! entirely," cried the individual thus addressed, as he paced the narrow apartment in a thoughtful mood, for from the first moment of their acquaintance, he had felt a deep interest in the unhappy Somerville and the beautiful Eliza. " And what has become of his poor wife ?" he inquired, after a long pause.

" Oh ! I do not know anything about *her*," replied the Widow. " But let us think of more important matters. Mr. Snatch will bring you your discharge to-morrow afternoon. The bail will be put in to-morrow morning; and as it is certain not to be rejected, you may prepare for a removal from this here odorous place."

" Poor Somerville !" ejaculated the kind-hearted Mr. Twill, scarcely heeding the good news concerning his own release, in his commiseration of the sorrows of another.

" You will of course return to Long's Hotel till—you know *what*?" said Mrs. Wokensmithers with a simper, called forth by the matrimonial allusion.

Mr. Twill replied in the affirmative; and after a little desultory conversation which would not afford any considerable degree of interest to the reader, Mrs. Wokensmithers and her faithful Penelope departed.

Now that the release of Mr. Twill was at hand, he felt more unsettled and nervous than he had yet been within the walls of the Bench. The sorrows of Somerville also haunted his mind, and formed a considerable portion of the topic of his thoughts. He first strolled upon the parade-ground, and communicated his speedy delivery to his acquaintances—for

friends they could not be called ; and then he returned to his room, more restless than ever. At length he bethought himself of having recourse to a book as a means of abstraction from the irritable nature of his reflections ; and he eventually succeeded in dissipating the most tedious portion of the day by the perusal of the ensuing tale.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EAGLE COACH.

A TRAVELLER'S TALE.

I HAD completed my arrangements for the approaching journey, and had desired the porter to convey my trunks to the Universal Office close by. I then descended from my little bed-room, and strolled into the Coffee-room to cast my eyes over the evening paper while my dinner was in preparation. The Coffee-room at Webb's is not large ; but it is comfortable ; and as the chilling blast whistled without, and the rain pattered against the windows, I made a wry face while I reflected on the inconveniences of travelling during such unpropitious weather.

"Never mind," said I at length, when the soup was placed upon the table : "the green fields and sunny skies of the south of France will soon compensate for present annoyances ;" and at this moment the force of the torrents against the windows redoubled.

There were two other individuals in the Coffee-room, besides myself. The first was making most vigorous attacks on a sirloin of beef, and indulging in repeated draughts from a pewter mug which stood before him. These he every now and then qualified with a glass of sherry, from a decanter on his left hand. He was a man of about forty years of age, with a florid complexion, little grey eyes, large whiskers, and a most prominent stomach. He was dressed in a cut-away green coat with worked brass buttons—a buff waistcoat—drab breeches—and top-boots. A large shirt frill protruded from his breast, over which hung a capacious double chin. A broad-brimmed hat, with a low crown, reposed on a chair near him. From his fob hung a massive gold chain, with five or six ponderous seals, that might well have tempted the unhallowed desires of a pickpocket in any part of the world where gold is esteemed. The appetite—or rather, voracity of this stout gentleman appeared marvellously difficult to allay ; and whenever he commenced a fresh assault on the sirloin before him, he invariably exclaimed in a loud and independent tone of voice, "D—n such knives as these!"

The other individual, who was also occupied in the achievement of the most luxurious repast of the five that mark the order of the day in the economy of an Englishman—viz, breakfast, luncheon, dinner, tea, and supper ; or of the three which are eaten by our Gallic neighbours ; viz, breakfast, dinner, and supper ;—the other individual, I say, was a thin spare young man, about five feet three inches in height, with fierce whiskers, large black moustachios, and an *Imperial* or *George* curling over his chin. His hair was parted in waving curls, and betrayed the

free use of oils and unguents in which the young man indulged. His nose was that which the English term a "pug nose" and which the French denominate a "*nez retroussé*"—a style of feature which in England is not admired, and which in France is preferred to the Roman, Grecian, or aquiline cast; his mouth, which when opened developed a set of beautifully white and even teeth, was somewhat affectedly screwed up when closed; and the extreme stiffness of his high satin stock almost prevented him from turning his head to the right or to the left. As he conveyed his food to his mouth, it was with the utmost difficulty that he saved the satin front of the aforesaid stock from catching the drops of gravy that fell from his meat. A black surtout—for he was in mourning—immoderately pinched in at the waist, showed off his symmetrical form to advantage; and his trousers, bulging out in immense plaits from the hips, gradually became narrower as they descended to his feet, where they were tightly stretched over a pair of polished boots by means of well-adjusted straps. And those boots—Oh! they spoke volumes in favour of "Warren's Jet Blacking from 30, the Strand," (as the song about the frolicksome cat has it) a thousand times more energetically than all the puffs in the world. A single glance at the dinner of this gentleman told me that he was perfectly aware how to select the most *piquant* dishes, and reject those grosser dainties with which the English kitchen abounds. Once he spoke during his repast—and only once; he dropped his napkin, and, as he stooped to pick it up, exclaimed, "*Dieu, que je suis maladroit!*"

An observation which one waiter made to another, informed me that the two gentlemen, whose *superficies* I have just so minutely delineated, were to be my fellow-travellers inside the coach to Dover. I therefore endeavoured to bring round a conversation, in order to form a more positive idea of the characters and dispositions of these individuals than their simple exterior allowed me to do. The Englishman had at length discussed as much as he chose of the viands before him, together with a quart of beer, and a bottle of sherry. He accordingly drew his chair near the fire, stretched his legs on the fender, lounged commodiously back in his seat, and having picked his teeth with an air of satisfaction and ease, began to sip the first glass of a pint of port. The Frenchman also made an end of his dinner, with which he had imbibed a bottle of claret, and called for a cup of coffee and a small quantity of brandy.

I now thought the ground was sufficiently clear for me to enter upon it: I therefore began by addressing myself to the stout gentleman.

"We shall have a rough night, I fear, Sir," said I.

"A fig for the weather, Sir," returned the stout gentleman. "I've got two devilish good great coats, I know, and shall travel inside, please the pigs. You do the same, I suppose, Sir?"

"Certainly," was my answer. "No reasonable man would think of risking his health on the outside of a coach during such weather as this."

"I've travelled outside in worse, Sir; but that was when I didn't weigh five-and-twenty stone, though:" and here the stout gentleman gave a tremendous chuckling laugh, while the young Frenchman stirred up six lumps of sugar in his coffee.

"Do you go as far as Dover?" I enquired, when the laugh was done, and the sugar was melted.

"To be sure I do: and to Frogland next day."

The French gentleman started slightly; but he contented himself with giving the Englishman one look of the deepest contempt—of the most sovereign contempt features ever before expressed—and resumed his former position.

"Gen'lemen, the coach is at the Universal Hoffee, and don't wait not for nobody nor for nothink," was the warning interruption of the hotel-porter, just as we were all getting comfortable round the fire.

"'Tis the Eagle coach—isn't it?" enquired the stout gentleman, preparing to put on his great coats.

"Yes—Mister Tomkins: the Heagle Co-ach, as you always goes by," replied the porter, "ven you goes on that there road."

The bills were speedily paid; and a few minutes saw us all three seated in the vehicle that was to convey us to Dover.

The Frenchman, whose name I discovered from the waiter to be Delville, was placed next to me; Mr. Tomkins was consequently opposite to us, occupying the whole seat—a circumstance that appeared to give him no small degree of satisfaction; for certainly four of his magnitude could not conveniently ride seventy miles without intermission in the Eagle, or any other coach, that only professes to carry "four insides" and "twelve outs."

And now all was prepared for starting: the coachman endorsed his third rough coat and swore his sixteenth oath at the rain—the guard sounded his horn and knocked down a small boy who stood in his way—the ladder was withdrawn just as an old gentleman had got his foot entangled between the top rails—the dirty vagabonds that stood gazing near, were ordered to get out of the street, an injunction which they obeyed by getting more into it—and the vehicle moved on.

"We travel quicker in England than you do in France, Sir," said Mr. Tomkins to the Frenchman, whom he now addressed for the first time.

"Your roads are generally better, and are not paved, Sir," returned M. Delville in very good English, as he drew a handsome cloak, lined with sables, more closely around him.

"Yes—and your diligences are cursed rumble-tumble heavy concerns, as well as your horses," continued Mr. Tomkins. "I was thirty seven hours and fifteen minutes coming from Paris to Calais last Christmas, by Laffitte and Calliard."

"Very possibly, Sir," said Delville; "and I have been twice overturned in the Canterbury mail during one summer," he added abruptly.

"Because, Sir, I dare say you were in the mail by some hazard the only two identical times it did overturn all that summer," rejoined Mr. Tomkins.

"Not unlikely, Sir," answered Delville with unwearied equanimity of temper; "and our diligences do not often require seven and thirty hours and fifteen minutes to complete the distance between Paris and Calais."

"Well—well—we won'ticker about a trifle, old boy," cried Mr. Tomkins familiarly: "fellow travellers shouldn't render the time unpleasant to



A Traveller's Tale

each other ; and as for myself, I am as free from vulgar national prejudices as any other Englishman living."

"So it appears," laconically remarked M. Delville.

"You don't mean to insinuate that I'm prejudiced, I hope," cried Mr. Tomkins ; "for if you do——"

"Come, gentlemen," said I, alarmed at the probable issue of an insult against the young Frenchman on the part of our stout companion ; "let us be friendly together, and endeavour to make each other as comfortable as we can in so small a space."

A silence now ensued, and was not interrupted for some time. Growing sentimental with reflection, I experienced a kind of regret at leaving the English metropolis, which most travellers have no doubt felt in a similar situation. In London I had many friends, relatives, and kind acquaintances. I had heard of the pleasures of Paris—but I had tasted those of London ; and the certainty of the existence of the latter was succeeded in my mind by a long speculative reverie as to the extent and nature of the former. I was not travelling for my amusement : business of importance obliged me to proceed to Marseilles and fix my abode there for a long time.

We soon arrived at Shooter's Hill, and an unconquerable emotion prompted me almost involuntarily to ejaculate, "Adieu, dear London, and all thy joys—adieu!"

"Adieu, dear London—and be d—d to you!" exclaimed Mr. Tomkins with most unsentimental emphasis, which disconcerted me for a moment, and excited the risible muscles of our French companion.

"Should you have any objection, gentlemen, to the smoke of a cigar?" enquired Mr. Tompkins after a short pause ; and, without waiting for an answer, he proceeded to light one by means of a phosphoric box which he carried in his pocket.

"*C'est très bien!*" murmured the Frenchman ironically.

"It is rather too bad," thought I ; and in another moment the coach was full of smoke.

"It does not inconvenience you, I hope," said Mr. Tomkins, caring very much if it did ; and emitting a vast and dusky volume from his mouth, while Delville let down the windows. "I provided myself with a little brandy too," continued the stout gentleman : "will either of you take a drop of Cognac ?".

Delville and myself refused the courteous proffer ; and Mr. Tomkins took a tolerably long draught : in five minutes he took another—and in three minutes more, he regaled himself with a third : in the course of an hour he was in as pleasant and interesting a state of intoxication as a coal-heaver on a Sunday morning, a parson on Confirmation Day, an overseer at a vestry dinner, an alderman on Lord Mayor's Day, a freeman at an election, a gentleman at a dinner party when he joins the ladies in the drawing-room, an author when he has received the price of a book, an old lady when she returns home from a Temperance-Society meeting, or an Irish member when he goes down to the House of Commons. Mr. Tomkins' cigar fell from his mouth—we with difficulty extinguished it amongst the straw beneath our feet—and, as it was now late, both Delville and myself saw with real pleasure the bulky form of our stout friend reclining against the side of the coach in that state which seemed

to promise a speedy oblivion of all mundane—or indeed, any other affairs, on his part in the enjoyment of a comfortable nap. But no such thing. His former squabbling—for altercation or quarrel it cannot be called—with M. Delville still occupied the thoughts of Mr. Tomkins; and his eyes, although temporarily closed, were not sealed in slumber. This much, however, we, his fellow-travellers, could not see; for the night was dark as pitch—the rain continued to fall in torrents—the moon ventured not to show her paly face—the distant stars were alike veiled in obscurity and gloom. The rustling of the wind—the noise of the turning wheels—the patter of the rain—and the voices of the coachman and guard outside, occasionally rising above the din of the elements, and mixing with the storm—all these commingled together, and fell confusedly upon our ears; although I could scarcely have imagined that Mr. Tomkins heard aught of all that outward war, so affected was his brain with liquor.

And here, the reader—always intelligent—always quick—always scrutinizing each sentence to detect a fault, though as invariably deemed courteous by the poor author who is obliged to propitiate him—may ask how I knew that Mr. Tomkins' eyes were shut, and that he was nevertheless far from being soundly asleep? Let me explain this apparent difficulty.

A few moments after he had settled himself to slumber in his corner, as before described, he suddenly started, and in a most singular tone of voice enquired where the devil he was?

"Where am I, my boys—eh? all in the dark! oh! oh! Well—I'll be d—d if I can keep one of my little peepers open; and after a drop of brandy, I never *can* go to sleep; it always makes me so merry, d'y'e see? By-the-bye, Mr. Frog, how d'y'e get on? Pretty well, my hearty—eh?"

"*Imbecille!*" muttered the Frenchman, scarcely deigning to take notice of this vulgarity, and adjusting himself as well as he could to a state that might woo the approach of slumber.

"What, no answer there!" cried Mr. Tomkins, with a tremendous hiccup: "you snivel-nosed, weazel-faced, frog-eating thief?"

"Sir," exclaimed Delville, now really irritated, not so much at the insolence of the other, as on account of the tiresome tenour of his behaviour, for it was waxing late, and we were drawing nigh to Rochester,—"Sir, I must beg of you to cease this noise, and suffer me to sleep—or at least to remain in peace."

Mr. Tomkins now commenced a very elaborate rhodomontade, in order to show that he had as much right inside the coach as *Mounseer*—that he was in his own seat, and not in the seat of *Mounseer*—that *Mounseer* need not listen to him unless he liked—and that he should talk on as long as might seem good to him. These positions being set down and demonstrated by Mr. Tomkins to his own peculiar satisfaction, and to our great annoyance, (for we were as much chagrined at the verbosity of his harangue and the length of time he wasted in arriving at the conclusion of his proofs, as at the privileges he was desirous of establishing,) we patiently resigned ourselves to the decrees of fate, seeing that it was useless to combat the opinions or extravagances of a drunken man.

We supped at Rochester, and then proceeded on our journey. Mr. Tomkins began gradually to nod his head, and despite his assertions that he seldom slept when under the influence of liquor, the tenor music of his nose soon convinced Delville and me that Morpheus had cast his opiate shackles around his prey.

Delville and myself felt no inclination to sleep; for we had eaten heartily at supper. We therefore entered into a conversation which became more lively and unreserved as it proceeded; and although my new acquaintance was somewhat conceited and vain, I began to form a good opinion of his literary acquirements, of his political and moral sentiments, and of his social and worldly intercourse and position.

"I am going," said he, "to Paris to be married in a few days. My future bride awaits me in our gay city of pleasure. I presume you are going as far as Paris yourself?"

"And thence to Marseilles," was my answer. "But my visit to France is not caused by so blissful a purpose as your's. Business, and not love, attracts me to France."

"My marriage will have been preceded by singular circumstances," remarked M. Delville. "It is now five years since I first saw Miss Caroline Howard—an English lady—at Paris. She was residing with her mother—a respectable widow, in a fashionable quarter; and will you believe me, Sir, that after a courtship of only six days, I made the young lady an offer?"

"That was somewhat precipitate," I remarked, laughing.

"No—but perhaps it was," returned Delville. "However, my suit was rejected by the prudent mother, who fancied that a momentary caprice alone influenced me in thus rashly proposing to link my fate with that of her daughter after so short an acquaintance. I was at that period dependent on my father: he heard of my proceeding, and immediately packed me off to London to get rid of my love-fit, as he called it. But he did not succeed. I stayed in London four years and a half—my father then joined me, and communicated his resolution of fixing his domicile in the English capital for the rest of his days. He was a rich merchant, and had large connexions in this country. Alas! poor man—he came, as it were, to breathe his last in my arms. Two months ago he died, leaving me sole heir to a good fortune. When my grief was partially subsided—you may suppose what was the first step I took."

"To write to Miss Howard," was my immediate answer.

"Just so,—and to renew my suit," continued M. Delville.

"Of course you were successful, since—" and I hesitated.

"Since I am so shortly going to marry her, you would say," proceeded Delville, with a laugh. "Well—that is true; and an only uncle of my future wife is to be present at the wedding. In the last letter I received from Paris, Caroline told me that this uncle would be there before me, or at all events as soon as I. She inadvertently omitted his name and address in London; and I was too impatient to see the dear girl whom the lapse of five years has not banished from my memory nor estranged from my affections, to wait another post to procure a certification of this deficiency. Had I been acquainted with those particulars, we might have journeyed together."

"I most sincerely wish you all happiness, though we were strangers a few hours ago; but your frankness has essentially interested me in your favour," I said; and Delville appeared anything but dissatisfied that he had acquainted me with his affairs.

"This uncle," said he, "had quarrelled with the family some years ago; and he has only been reconciled to Mrs. Howard within a few months. The *réunion* at Paris will therefore serve two purposes: namely, to celebrate a marriage, and to cement future friendships hitherto interrupted."

"Hitherto—what did you say?" drawled forth Mr. Tomkins, who at this moment awoke, as the grey dawn of morning began to chase away the dark clouds of night and throw its early beams over the wide vault of heaven, while the piercing chill, that is ushered in by twilight, searched myself and fellow-travellers to the backbone.

Mr. Tomkins gradually became sober; and when the fumes of the last night's potations were nearly all dispersed, he, urged by certain reminiscences of his late misconduct, seized hold of Delville's hand, begged to apologize for his unhandsome behaviour, and swore that he was a devilish good kind of fellow for a Frenchman. M. Delville bowed politely, but distantly; and returned a courteous answer in as few words as possible.

To be brief, we arrived safely at Dovor, whence myself and Delville embarked for Calais. Mr. Tomkins stayed behind to recruit himself for a day or two after his drunken frolic. At Calais we took a postchaise and proceeded to Paris.

We left Calais at seven o'clock in the evening and arrived in Paris at about the same hour on the following one. It was in the winter time; and the shops were all lit up throughout the vast metropolis. We entered the mighty city by the Faubourg Montmartre; and never shall I forget the impression made upon my mind by the first glimpse that I caught of the capital of the greatest nation in the universe. The lofty houses, more like regal palaces than private dwellings—the crowds of gaily dressed people in the streets—the splendour of the brilliantly illuminated Cafés—the spacious Boulevards, on which the Revolution of July has still left a few stately trees—the luxurious display of the shops—the gorgeous equipages of princes and merchants, peers and deputies, opera-dancers and songsters, proceeding to the theatres—the squadron of stern warriors hastening to post the sentries at their respective places—the massive diligences thundering along the streets—the bands of itinerant musicians—the charlatan puffing off his specifics to a gaping crowd—the Column of Napoleon towering to the sky—the vast hotels inhabited by the ministers, and which are far more magnificent than the palaces of the sovereign of England—the gardens of the Tuilleries—and the peerless row of buildings which form the Rue de Rivoli,—these constituted the mass of splendour, novelty, and noise which greeted my first entry into Paris!

We proceeded to a hotel in the Rue de Rivoli, where we both took a temporary lodging. Of course Delville's first care was to seek the dwelling of Mrs. Howard; and, as he afterwards assured me, the meeting with Caroline was up to that moment the happiest event in his life: this he told me the day before the marriage. Within the week I had the

honour of being introduced to the ladies (for myself and Delville had grown intimate—I know not whether from the force of the circumstances that accidentally threw us together, or from a certain similarity of disposition that acted as a reciprocal attraction and drew us towards each other). Caroline was a sweet girl—amiable as she was pretty—and possessing an accomplished mind, an excellent understanding, and an affectionate disposition.

Almost the first question that I asked, when the ceremonies of introduction, and certain formal enquiries and explanations concerning health, weather, and the badness of the roads for travelling at that period of the year, were concluded, was whether the uncle had arrived. A reply in the negative was scarcely returned, when the front door bell rang with uncommon violence, and a heavy step soon approached the apartment in which we were seated.

"It is he, I am sure!" exclaimed Caroline, with anxiety depicted on her countenance.

"I hope so," whispered Delville, who was impatient for the celebration of the marriage.

Caroline smiled sweetly upon her lover, for she comprehended his meaning.

The door opened—a gentleman entered the room—a very fat gentleman—it was the uncle—and that uncle was Mr. Tomkins—the identical Englishman with whom myself and Delville had travelled in the Eagle coach.

"Now—eh? what now?" cried Mr. Tomkins, somewhat stupefied at this unexpected *rencontre*, as well he might be.

"We never tell tales," said Delville significantly: and in a few moments the utmost harmony prevailed.

What more need I now say? The happy couple were speedily united; I was invited to the wedding, which was celebrated without any ostentatious display. Mr. Tomkins drank immoderately at the dinner table; and when he was ready to fall from his chair, he swore with a terrible oath that Delville was a devilish good fellow for a Frenchman!

CHAPTER XIX.

A CHAPTER IN WHICH IT IS HOPED THE READER WILL FIND MUCH TO INTEREST AND PLEASE HIM.

It was ten o'clock at night, and the supper was concluded at the house of Doctor Wokensmithers. The five parlour-pensioners, whom we have before alluded to, had retired to their respective apartments, and Somerville was conversing with the Doctor more familiarly than he hitherto had done, for the purpose of lulling asleep that individual's suspicions relative to the possibility of an attempt at escape having been meditated, when Benjamin entered to make his report for the night.

"Well, Ben," said the Doctor, "what news this evening?"

"All right, Sir," was the answer.

"Take a glass of gin, Ben," said the Doctor, who was in an unusually

sweet temper ; and the proffered dram was poured out and drank in the space of another minute.

" Cold night, Sir," said Ben, as he placed the glass upon the table ; " and yet them mad fellows which tears their clothes don't seem to perceive the weather at all. There was three of them as stark naked this evening as ever they was born, and there they sate upon the floor as cozie as if they was afore a comfortable fire with a pint of purl to cheer them. By the bye, the garden-roller took another freak into his head this evening, Sir."

" Did he, Ben ?" cried Wokensmithers : " and what was it ?"

" He fancies he's a leg of mutton, Sir," was the reply, " and stands before the fire-place turning round and round to roast. Joe happened to fall asleep for a quarter of an hour or so, and the lunatic took the lamp and emptied all the oil over himself. The noise awoke Joe, and when the madman was asked why he did it, he said that if he wasn't basted, he should burn."

" Indeed !" ejaculated the Doctor, laughing heartily.

" True as you're there, Sir," continued Ben ; " but that's nothink to the pump : he's also got another crotchet in his head. He will have it now that he's a wind-mill, and he swings his arms round and round just for all the world like the sails, and keeps gnashing his teeth to grind the corn. They've pretty nearly all taken new fancies into their heads this evening."

" And the girl ?" enquired the Doctor mysteriously.

" Quiet up stairs to-night," replied Ben. " The dead man thinks he's a cat, and sits purring and mewing in a corner : it was but a few days ago that he got a flower some where or another, stuck it in his hair, and fancied himself to be a flower-pot. Joe was obliged to bring in the garden watering pot and water him, or else he'd ha' gone off into reglar hysterics. I recollect about a fortnight since, when he took it into his head that he was a donkey, and fell to braying and kicking like anything : he was obliged to have the strait waistcoat on at last, because he got outrageous when I wouldn't give him his water in a pail. What rum things one *does* see in a lunatic-asylum, to be sure !"

" A little of life, eh—Ben ?" chuckled the Doctor.

" Life !" cried that respectable functionary : " ah ! and of death too !" he added in a tone that made Somerville shudder.

" Right, right !" said Wokensmithers hastily ; then, by way of changing the conversation, he added, " Yes—you and I have seen some queer things in the ' Incurables : ' do you recollect the poor fellow who fancied he was a clock, and kept saying ' tick ! tick ! ' all day-long ?"

" Yes, and he used to strike the hours too as regular as possible," added Ben. " I almost think I hear his ' ding—ding—ding,' now. Poor fellow !"

" He went off in a fit because he said no one would wind him up," observed the Doctor.

The conversation being here brought to a close, Mr. Benjamin made his bow and retired, and Somerville shortly after withdrew to his chamber.

" To night," said Somerville to himself, as he bolted his door, and placed a chair against it in such a manner as to prevent it from being

burst open, even were the lock forced,—“to-night my grand attempt shall be made. Last night I was unsuccessful in concealing a knife—now I have it!” and as he uttered these words, he took the instrument from his pocket. “Poor Maria! her deplorable situation shall be my first care, if I manage to escape from this vile hole!”

Somerville had already made up his mind how to proceed. To attempt to saw the bars, he now found would be useless; but with the sharp knife which he had secreted, he applied himself vigorously to cut away the wood-work which retained the basis of each bar in its place; and in the course of an hour he had accomplished his task. Hope whispered joyful things in his ears—nerved his arm—fertilized his imagination—and gave him courage to proceed in his attempt. All was quiet throughout the house—it was nearly midnight—the stars afforded an auspicious lustre—and everything seemed to favour his design.

Having extracted two of the iron bars from the window-frame, he tied the sheets of his bed together, attached one end firmly to some of the bars that remained, and then listened attentively to ascertain if all were quiet. Not a sound seemed to menace the safety of his plan—he rubbed his hands joyously together—murmured the name of Eliza—and swung himself from the window. In a moment he stood in the yard beneath.

“God be thanked!” cried Somerville: “the most difficult part of my task is accomplished!”

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when he heard a window suddenly opened—it was the one above his own room; and then the voice of the Doctor demanded what was the matter in the yard. Somerville looked up—he saw Wokensmithers’ head projecting from the window—for a moment he was rooted to the spot.

“Help! help!” cried the Doctor: “Somerville has escaped! Ben—Joe—Susan!”

And in a moment two other windows were opened—the voices of the Doctor’s myrmidons, muttering curses, fell upon the ear of the young man—lights appeared in the corridors on the third story—hasty footsteps were descending the stairs.

“We shall have him yet!” cried the Doctor: and at that moment a key rattled in the lock of the door which led into the yard.

Somerville heard the jarring sound—and all his presence of mind returned. A failure now would, he knew, annihilate all future hopes of success: the case was desperate—the predicament was fraught with danger.

He rushed to the door of the little out-house before described, pulled it open, clambered up it, and gained the slanting roof just as his pursuers arrived in the yard.

“After him, Ben!” shouted the Doctor; and in an instant the ruffian was adopting the same means which Somerville had recourse to, to scale the out-house.

Somerville was at the top of the wall, when Ben attained the roof of the shed.

“I have him!” cried Ben; and he seized the young man by the collar.

"Hold him—don't relax your grasp!" shouted the doctor: "five pounds, if you secure him;" and while Wokensmithers thus encouraged one of his followers, the other was hastening to lend his assistance to his *confrère*.

But Somerville had purposely waited for his pursuer in order to determine his fate on the spot; for he knew that if he leapt from the wall, he should be speedily followed by the Doctor's blood-hounds, and perhaps entrapped once more through the aid of the police. He therefore suffered Ben to approach him; and at the moment the hand of the keeper touched his collar, he dealt him one blow which compelled him to loosen his hold, and another that hurled him from the shed into the yard behind, just as the Doctor had uttered the inducement to make sure the capture above mentioned.

At the same moment that Ben fell bruised and senseless into the yard on one side of the wall, Somerville dropped into a field on the other. He had escaped unhurt, and in a few moments was in the high road, along which he ran for some minutes as if life and death were the alternatives depending on his speed. Indeed it is uncertain how long he would have maintained the same pace, had he not been stopped by a violent concussion with which he ran against an individual who was hastening in the direction he himself had left.

"A thousand apologies!" cried Somerville: "I hope I have not hurt you."

"No—it can't be—it is impossible—quite impossible!" exclaimed the individual thus addressed, without taking notice of Somerville's apology.

"Your voice is familiar to me, Sir," said the young man, starting, and feeling an involuntary shudder pass over him, for he was still apprehensive of danger.

"Your name is Somerville?" cried the person against whom Frederick had run so violently.

"And your's?" demanded Somerville, prudently avoiding a direct reply to the question, till he should have ascertained with whom he was conversing.

"Is Twill," was the reply.

"My generous benefactor, my friend!" ejaculated Somerville. "How ungrateful of me not to have at once recognised your voice."

"Truce to apology," said Mr. Twill. "You have left the mad-house, I perceive?"

"This moment. And you the Bench?"

"This evening at nine o'clock," returned Mr. Twill: "and my first care was to come hither to *reconnître* the place in which you were immured, late as was the hour."

"Generous friend!" cried Somerville. "But how—"

"Ask me no questions now," interrupted Mr. Twill: "but reply to mine. Have you escaped?"

"Yes."

"Then let us hasten towards town, and we will take the first coach we see," said Mr. Twill. "It is fortunate that I put my mad scheme of coming down here at twelve o'clock at night into force. But the truth is, I wanted a walk after my incarceration, and I was moreover exceedingly anxious about you."

In a short time the two pedestrians were enabled to obtain a hackney-coach, and as the vehicle rolled rapidly along in the direction indicated by Somerville, an explanation of all that had lately occurred took place.

"Do you suspect who was the author of this atrocity?" enquired Mr. Twill, when Somerville had related the manner in which he had been dragged from his home by the ruthless Wokensmithers and his followers.

"I have good reason to believe that it is one who trembles at the mere mention of my name," returned the young man. "But there is a horrible mystery connected with all this, which I cannot now explain to you. The time may come when I shall be enabled to place the utmost confidence in you—but as yet, the secret is not entirely mine own."

"My dear Somerville," said Mr. Twill, "I do not wish to penetrate into your private affairs. Consider me your friend to what extent you choose: I am ready to assist you with my advice, my influence, or my purse, as far as they will go; and if you feel any curiosity relative to the origin of your incarceration in the lunatic asylum, I dare say I can ascertain the real truth. In fact, I have some thoughts of marrying the sister-in-law of Doctor Wokensmithers: she has a large income—and my shattered fortunes must be built up again by some such sacrifice."

"Oh! I can too well guess who was the author of my calamity," answered Somerville, "and will not therefore ask you to make the enquiries proposed. Indeed, I beg as another favour in addition to those for which I already am indebted to you, not to allude to the subject in the presence of the Doctor or his relations."

"Your wishes shall be attended to," answered Mr. Twill. "But here I must leave you—I have to return to Long's Hotel, for it is very late. If you will favour me with your address, I will call upon you in the morning—or rather in a few hours; as it is already past one o'clock."

Somerville acquainted his kind friend with the place of his residence; and they separated at the bottom of Ludgate-hill, Somerville retaining the coach to proceed to Lambeth, and Mr. Twill taking another to convey him to Bond-street. But before they separated, the latter had insisted upon the former accepting a loan for his immediate wants.

With a beating heart did Somerville alight from the vehicle at the door of the house in which Eliza lodged. He paid the coachman, and knocked gently so as not to alarm the neighbours. The door was opened by his landlady, who started when the sound of his voice fell upon her ears, as if it were that of a spectre risen from the dead.

"Hush!" exclaimed Somerville. "How is Eliza?"

"Why! poor thing," said the woman in a tone which did not even affect melancholy, "she's ——"

"She's what! haste—speak!" cried Somerville impatiently. "She is here?"

"She is here, Sir," was the answer; "but ——"

"But what! For God's sake do not leave me in suspense!"

"She's very—very ill, Sir," added the landlady.

Somerville seized the candle which the woman held in her hand and rushed up stairs to the chamber where his wife lay. Eliza was asleep—her cheek was deadly pale—her eye-lids were tinged with a blueish dye, and her lips, which were apart, exhaled a hot and feverish breath. Her long dark hair floated wildly over her naked bosom, the dazzling

whiteness of which it set off to advantage—one arm was placed beneath her aching head—and the loud palpitations of her heart fell upon her husband's ear like the ticking of a clock, in the silence of the night. And she was so lovely, as she lay asleep, even in her illness—(while on her forehead was impressed a sublime pallor, that poetic diadem which grief and indisposition sometimes bestow upon their elect)—and as her long tresses were agitated by the heavings of her breast—that Somerville dared not disturb her. He imprinted a kiss upon her lips, and hastened into the parlour adjoining, which he paced for some time, wrapt up in the deepest meditation. Suddenly his eye glanced towards the mantel-piece—a letter, with the seal unbroken, met his view. He hastened to possess himself of it—the writing of the superscription was unknown to him—and the post-mark informed him that it had only been delivered a few hours previously. Having hastily tore it open, he read the following words:—

"Bernard's Inn, Holborn.

“Sir,—We should feel much obliged if you could favour us with an interview at your earliest convenience, relative to matters which deeply concern your own interests.

“We are, Sir, your obedient Servants,

“WILSON and JONES, *Solicitors.*”

“Fresh troubles, doubtless!” cried Somerville, aloud, as he threw the letter upon the table; then, with a bitter smile, he added, “but, thank God, the cup of my miseries is tolerably full—one drop more, and it will overflow!”

“Who is there?” exclaimed Eliza, in a faint voice, from the inner room.

“Tis I—Frederick—your husband!” cried the young man, hastening to catch his beloved wife to his bosom: “I—who have escaped from the vile den in which they confined me!”

“O Frederick! can I believe my eyes—my ears—or is it only a dream?” murmured Eliza.

“No—dearest girl, it is a reality,” was the impassioned reply. “But you must compose yourself—any unnecessary excitement will only cause a relapse.”

“Alas! Frederick—I have been ill, very—very ill since you left me,” whispered Eliza: “and I had no friend to soothe my sick pillow—no one to breathe a kind word in my ears—not a soul to comfort me! I was a prey to my own sad reflections, and to all the horrors of solitude; oh! I thought I should have died—for I knew not whither they had taken you—I received no letter—I was suddenly deprived of all I hold dear in this world—oh! Frederick, I was very, very miserable!”

“I am now restored to you, Eliza,” cried the young man; “and nothing again shall wrest me from your arms. I will procure pistols, and my enemies shall possess only my corpse, should they prevail against me!”

“Talk not thus, Frederick,” murmured Eliza; “you terrify me.”

“Tranquillize yourself, dearest girl,” returned the fond husband; “I am come to render you happy, and not to make you miserable;” and they once more threw themselves into each other's arms.

At nine o'clock on the following morning, Somerville presented himself at the offices of Messrs. Wilson and Jones, of Bernard's Inn, Holborn.

"I may as well know the worst at once," said he to himself : "suspense is more terrible than the direst reality."

He enquired if either of the partners were disengaged ; and, in reply to his question, an impudent youth who was busily employed in reading the *Morning Chronicle*, pointed to a door communicating with an inner office, and desired him "to walk in there, and he would find Mr. Jones alone."

Embarrassed and trembling at the idea of encountering fresh calamities, Somerville obeyed the directions of the clerk, and found himself in the presence of a little man, with white hair, and large gold spectacles; who eyed him askance, surveyed him from top to toe without appearing to be looking at him, and gruffly enquired his business.

"I believe you sent me this letter, Sir," said Somerville, stepping forward, and handing the epistle to the lawyer.

"Ah! have I the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Somerville ?" said Mr. Jones, suddenly changing from the most repulsive and stern individual into the politest and most cringing courtier.

"That is my name, Sir," returned Somerville, astonished by the variation of the lawyer's manner.

"Pray sit down," cried Jones ; "allow me to take your hat. I have been searching for you these last three weeks, but without success till yesterday morning."

"Indeed," murmured Somerville.

"And it was only by the luckiest chance in the world," continued the lawyer, "that I happened to discover your address. We are solicitors to a large banking-house in the city, and by accident one of the partners in the firm was here yesterday morning. I happened to mention my embarrassment relative to your address, and he immediately favoured me with it."

"And you see that I have obeyed your summons, Sir," rejoined Somerville : "but I am afraid that anything rather than good news awaits me. I was born under a luckless star—and God only knows when Fortune will cease to persecute me!"

"Ah! ah! we shall see," said the lawyer, with a short chuckling laugh. "Allow me to ask you a question or two? You can of course procure your baptismal certificate?"

"I have it already," was the immediate reply.

"So much the better," added the lawyer ; "and if it be necessary you can find one or two people, I dare say, to establish your identity."

"Certainly," answered Somerville.

"In that case," added the lawyer, "the business will proceed easily enough. Do you happen to recollect anything about an uncle on your mother's side—of the name of ____?"

"Williams?" interrupted Somerville, hastily. "Oh! yes—he went out to the West Indies in his own ship, when I was a very little boy, and from that moment the family lost all traces of him. It was supposed that his vessel had foundered at sea, and that every soul perished."

"The truth has now come to light—at length," said the lawyer, with a cunning smile. "Your uncle was taken prisoner by a French privateer, and all his property was captured. Reduced to despair by this sudden stroke of calamity, he was long plunged in a state of apathy from which he only recovered when the peace of 1814 released him from a pre-

dicament of bondage, as it were, in France. He sailed from Havre in a merchant-vessel bound for Martinique, in which island he established himself in trade ; and beginning the world once more with almost nothing, he laid the foundation of a vast fortune."

"Indeed!" cried Somerville, starting—he knew not why.

"Yes—and a few months ago he proposed returning to England to enjoy that wealth which he had acquired by his industry and the success of his speculations," continued the lawyer. "He accordingly transferred a considerable portion of his fortune to this country, and we were employed to lay it out advantageously—a commission we fulfilled to the entire satisfaction of his London agents. But Death, Mr. Somerville, intervened to destroy his hopes —"

Somerville sank back in his chair—a sickness, a giddiness, which almost seemed to suffocate him, suddenly seized upon him—and he felt as if he were about to faint. The lawyer perceived the situation of the young man, and hastened to pour him out a glass of water, which speedily revived him.

"Yes, Sir," added Mr. Jones ; "your uncle departed this life, leaving an immense fortune behind him—and you, Mr. Somerville, are his sole heir!"

"Impossible—it is a dream!" cried the young man, passing his hand across his forehead, as if to dissipate the visions of a disordered imagination. "Oh! no—such good fortune cannot await a wretch like me—an individual, Sir, who subsists upon charity—upon the charity of his friends—oh! no—it is impossible!"

"It is as I have the honour to tell you," said the lawyer, with a smile. "Eight or ten thousand a-year may be the produce of the property; so, after all, you are not the richest man in London," he added, chuckling and rubbing his hands, as if he had uttered an excellent joke.

"Oh! it is a thousand times more than I can ever require!" said Somerville, whose brain seemed to whirl, and who actually felt as if he were in reality becoming a fit subject for Doctor Wokensmithers.

"In two or three years you will tell me a different story," returned the lawyer. "When you once get accustomed to the enjoyment of wealth, ten thousand *per annum* will not appear too much."

"I can scarcely yet believe the news," cried Somerville; "I—who yesterday had nothing."

"In two or three days, I can place a hundred thousand pounds at your disposal," continued the lawyer; and if in the meantime you require money, I will direct my bankers to cash your cheques to any amount you choose."

"Alas? if it were all a dream!" murmured Somerville, astonished at the mention of so vast a sum in connection with his own name. "Oh! do not amuse yourself, Sir, at my expense; it can be but a sorry kind of sport for you!"

"Nay—here are the deeds and letters which you are at liberty to peruse, if you persist in doubting the truth of what I tell you," cried the lawyer; and Somerville felt convinced that the tide of his fortune had turned, and that he who only a few hours before dared not look into the future, so dreary was the prospect, was now wealthy beyond the hopes of his most exalted ambition!

CHAPTER XX.

THE MISERY OF NOT BEING ABLE TO PAY ONE'S DEBTS IS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF THIS CHAPTER.—SOMERVILLE RETURNS HOME.—THE DEPARTURE FOR FRANCE.

ELIZA was reclining upon the sofa in her little parlour, while her husband was engaged with the solicitor, as detailed in the preceding chapter. She was still pale and feeble, but a gleam of joy illuminated her countenance, and a smile played upon her lip. What to her was illness—what to her was poverty, since Frederick was restored to her? The only draw-back to her perfect felicity—besides the grand aim and pursuit to which her soul was devoted—was the uncertainty and suspense caused by the letter which had called Somerville to the office of a lawyer at so early an hour. Her ruminations concerning the possible nature of the business alluded to by Messrs. Wilson and Jones were interrupted by the landlady, who entered the room with a most suspicious looking paper in her hand.

"If you please, ma'am," said she, "will it now be convenient to settle this little bill?"

"I must really request your patience till the return of my husband," said Eliza in a mild and soothing tone.

"That's the old story over and over again," returned the landlady; "and I *must* and *will* see the colour of your money this morning. I've been responsible to the doctor and chemist for you—and then there's the washing—altogether, with my little bill, nine pounds, eleven, and two-pence, towards which you paid me three pounds."

"I know that my husband has a little money with him," answered Eliza, "and I expect him back in an hour or two. You can surely wait till then."

"I tell you it's of no use waiting," cried the landlady; "my landlord has been here already twice this morning, and the chemist has sent three times. So either hand over the money, or make room for people who *will* and *can* pay."

"Insolent woman!" exclaimed Eliza, now losing all patience, and giving vent to the indignation she had hitherto smothered: "because we are poor, are we to be treated in a manner which would disgrace the lowest beggar in the streets?"

"You *are* beggars!" retorted the landlady.

"Leave the room," cried Eliza; fire flashing from her eyes.

"Leave the room, indeed!" shouted the landlady: "*whose* room, pray, ma'am—your's or mine, I should like to know? Perhaps you can tell me!" and the insolent wretch walked backwards and forwards, uttering all kinds of abuse against the unfortunate young woman, who wept and hid her face in her hands. "Ah! that's right—cry away," continued the landlady; "tears will be sure to pay my bill!"

Then, as if she were desirous of inflicting as much pain as possible upon Eliza, she suddenly rushed towards the bed-room door, locked it, and put the key in her apron-pocket.

"This is what it is," resumed the landlady, after a minute's silence ; "we let our lodgings to people without a reference—we cook and *do* for them—we pay the milkman and the baker—and when we ask for our money, we receive nothing but excuses. But here's the washerwoman to speak for herself;"—and as she uttered these words a tall woman, with an excessively red nose, and clad in a species of brown great coat, bounced into the room.

"Is my bill paid?" cried she ; "cos I've brought home the clean linen, an' if so be the old 'count isn't round up, I shan't leave it."

"Paid! no—" returned the landlady ; and then they both commenced a volley of abuse and vituperation, which English ladies of that class are particularly skilful in using—a talent to be met with in no other country, and which is a far more striking proof of the progress of civilization than either gin-palaces, debtor's gaols, pawnbroker's shops, treadmills, or workhouses.

In the midst of the disturbance, to which the servant-girl was attentively listening on the staircase, Somerville knocked at the front door.

"Ah! I'm glad you're here now, Mrs. Buggins," said the landlady to the washerwoman. "You'll just see how much we shall be paid, and what faith there is to be put in that young woman's promises."

"All people is swindlers now-a-days," sobbed Mrs. Buggins, not even making an exception in favour of herself ; "and it's a very hard thing to see one's children fit to go to the workus arter so many years o' hard labour and honest toil."

The good woman's complaints were cut short by the entrance of Somerville, who rushed into the room, his countenance radiant with delight.

"Come in a coach too," muttered the landlady : "I never *did* see such extravagance for one who can't pay!"

"Now, then—my little bill!" exclaimed Mrs. Buggins, thrusting forward a dirty slip of paper.

"And mine," echoed the landlady.

Somerville took no notice of the two women, but hastened to embrace his wife, who was weeping on the sofa.

"Heavens, what is the matter, Eliza?" cried he, alarmed at the almost hysterical state in which he found her.

"Those insolent women, Frederick," murmured the afflicted girl, pointing towards the two creditors.

"Insolent, indeed!" cried they simultaneously ; "because we demand our lawful due!"

"Wretches!" ejaculated Somerville, "how dare you thus intrude upon the privacy of an invalid?"

"I knew what it would be," cried the landlady.

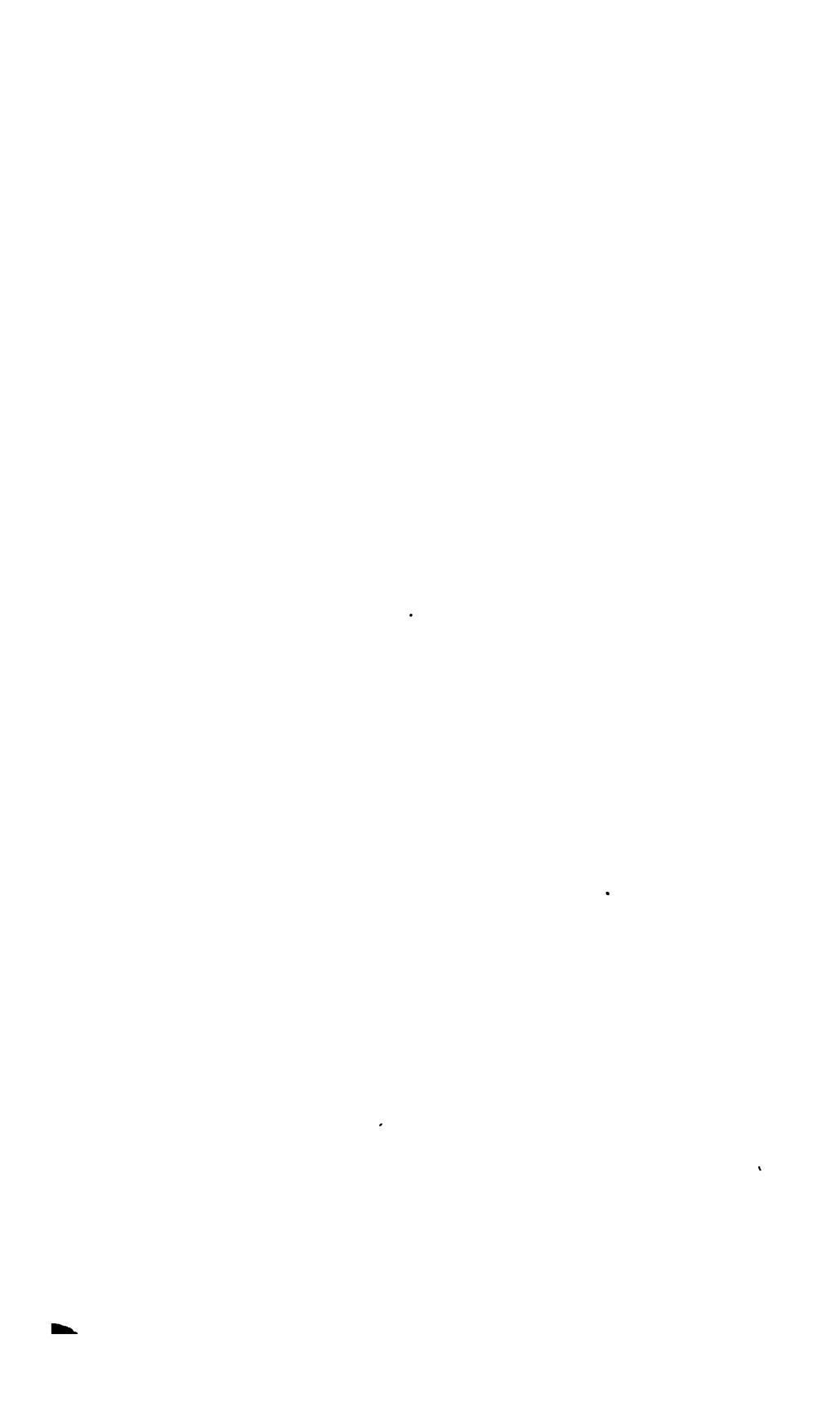
"Alas! poor me, as went without my morning's meal," sobbed the washerwoman, who had indeed been most disagreeably obliged to dispense with her early glass of gin before she turned out to collect her debts.

"There—there—pay yourselves—and leave us," cried Somerville throwing a handful of bank-notes and sovereigns upon the table.

Eliza uttered an exclamation almost approaching to a scream of



O tempo viver com a gente.



astonishment, and the landlady and washerwoman were for some time unable to articulate a single word.

"I'm sure if it is n't convenient to settle to-day, Sir," at length muttered the landlady, "I don't wish to trouble you. Would you like to order dinner?"

"I always said I was n't afeerd o' *my* moiney," observed Mrs. Buggins.

Somerville hastened to settle the accounts which had been presented to him, and then motioned the two women to leave the room.

"Is there any linen to take, Sir?" enquired Mrs. Buggins, in as smooth a tone as she could accomplish.

"No!" replied Somerville.

"I hope you are contented with the house, Sir," said the landlady timidly.

"We leave it this day," was the laconic answer: and the woman retired, more discomfited than even a whole regiment of Belgian soldiers would be, were a French corporal and two file of men to march over the frontier with a drummer and a fifer.

When Somerville was left alone with his wife, he gradually unfolded the news of his good fortune, and began debating with her relative to their future proceedings. To attempt to describe the joy which was experienced by the young female, who but a few minutes previously had shed bitter tears for the want of a few sorry pounds, would be useless. There are certain feelings which defy all delineation, but which the mind can probably conceive. The happy couple mingled their tears of joy together, and in each other's arms they poured forth their gratitude to Him who had at length taken pity upon their destitute and friendless position.

In the course of the morning, true to his promise, Mr. Twill made his appearance; and most sincere were the congratulations which he offered to his friends on their sudden accession to wealth, as soon as he was made acquainted with their good fortune. Somerville availed himself of that opportunity to repay his kind benefactor the various sums he had received from him, and in the most delicate manner he tendered a loan to any amount to him who had relieved his wants in the hour of need. But Mr. Twill obstinately refused to accept the proffered assistance: he declared that he was in the possession of funds more than sufficient for his present purposes, and that the difficulties, which had consigned him to the King's Bench, were by no means troublesome at that moment.

"Be assured," added Mr. Twill, "that whenever I require any pecuniary aid, I shall address myself to you."

"On that condition only will I drop the subject for the present," returned Somerville: and the conversation immediately took another turn.

But it is not our purpose to dwell upon this portion of our narrative: suffice it to say, that in the course of a few days Somerville and his wife were comfortably established in a house which they hired at the West End of the town; and that Messieurs Wilson and Jones speedily put the fortunate heir in possession of that part of his wealth which was already in England. They received his instructions relative to the disposal of the remainder in Martinique; and when once his pecuniary affairs were arranged to his satisfaction, Somerville bethought himself of

the unfortunate female whose execrable treatment at the mad-house had enlisted his sympathies in her cause. He communicated the circumstances attending the brutal behaviour of the Doctor's myrmidons to the helpless girl, to Mr. Twill, and that gentleman promised to make immediate enquiries into the matter.

Somerville, being now possessed of the means to prosecute his search after the individual whom he burned to encounter, frequented the theatres and places of public amusement, and made enquiries at the various hotels to which the denizens of the fashionable world resort. But all his endeavours were vain ; and day after day—and week after week elapsed—and still nothing but the bitterness of disappointment was his share. He employed individuals to follow up that search which he was often inclined to abandon—he lavished his money in profusion in order to leave no means of obtaining his wishes untried—and he wandered about the streets of this vast metropolis, not as the rich man who might roll in a carriage if he would, but as a desolate being looking after that which he fruitlessly sought to find.

One evening he returned home to his magnificent house, where several domestics awaited his slightest orders, where a sumptuous repast was served up to pamper his appetite, and where an affectionate wife enlivened his presence with kisses and with smiles. He threw himself upon a sofa, passed his hand across his forehead, and desired the attendants to leave the room.

When he was alone with his wife, he rose, paced the apartment for a few minutes, and then drank a glass of sparkling wine to compose himself, for his heart was full of strange and varied emotions.

"I have at length succeeded," said he, in a low tone of voice : "our vengeance is at hand!"

Eliza uttered a faint scream, and sank upon the sofa.

"Yes," continued Somerville, "the villain himself has at last agreed to meet me. This letter was conveyed to me through the medium of his bankers, upon whom I have called daily to solicit an interview with him :"—and as he uttered these words, he drew a letter from his bosom, and tendered it to Eliza.

The contents were as follows :—

"At last you shall be gratified ! I will meet you, Somerville, in mortal duel—and one only shall quit the ground alive. Had you continued to languish in poverty, I should have eluded you : but now that you are wealthy, and that your gold is daily employed in bribing spies to trace me out, this child's play shall be terminated at once. I know all your movements—all your plans : if you have spies, I have mine also : let us hasten to set at rest the cause of their employment.

"To morrow morning I shall be in Calais. You can follow me thither. I shall be accompanied by one friend : of course you will not forget to bring your's. My address will be Dessin's Hotel.

"WILLIAM STANLEY."

The letter fell from the hands of Eliza, and a deadly pallor overspread her countenance. For some minutes she remained unable to articulate a syllable : a war of the liveliest emotions was raging in her bosom. On one side was the prospect of vengeance gratified—on the other the gory

corse of her husband! Oh! it was a terrible combat between her selfishness and her love!

Frederick saw what was passing in her mind, and hastened to change the current of her thoughts. He assured her that no earthly power should persuade him to forego the opportunity which now presented itself of either ridding the world of a wretch who was unfit to live, or of falling himself in the attempt. Eliza listened in silence to the passionate language of her husband: she neither offered to turn him from his purpose, nor did she urge him on to meet the chance of death. But her feelings were such that no pen can describe!

Having hastily eaten a morsel of the inviting repast which was served up, Somerville proceeded to Long's Hotel, where he fortunately found Mr. Twill discussing claret and dessert in the coffee-room.

"My dear friend," said Somerville, drawing a chair close to the table at which Mr. Twill was seated, "I have a very great favour to ask of you—a favour which I am convinced you will not refuse to grant—"

"My purse, I know you do not require," interrupted Mr. Twill; "my advice is not worth asking: so what else you can have to solicit, may the devil confound me if I can guess."

"The matter is serious, and bears not jesting," remonstrated Somerville in a kind though somewhat reproachful tone: "it is an affair of life and death."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Twill, suddenly assuming an air of attention and interest.

"I have at length an opportunity of avenging myself upon the villain who threw me into a mad-house, and who endeavoured to stop my pursuit of him by consigning me to the most horrible of prisons, and by identifying me with the most wretched of mankind. God! my blood boils," exclaimed the young man, gnashing his teeth with rage, "when I reflect upon my wrongs!"

"This is indeed serious," remarked Mr. Twill. "I understand the service you require of me. You want a friend?"

"Exactly," returned Somerville. "We fight in France. Can you accompany me to-night?"

"I must, I suppose," said Mr. Twill. "It is true that I promised to make up a rubber this evening at Mrs. Wokensmithers'; but of course everything must give way to an affair of honour."

"At ten o'clock precisely a post-chaise will be at my door. We shall proceed to Dover—to-morrow morning we shall cross the channel to Calais—and by to-morrow evening will the fate of one be decided!"

"Do not be alarmed, my dear fellow," said Mr. Twill. "I have been second in a duel upwards of a dozen times, and only three were killed out of the individuals whom I accompanied to the field. But, by the way, what is the name of your antagonist?"

"Stanley," was the answer.

"Is he a good shot?" enquired Mr. Twill.

"I neither know nor care," replied Somerville. "May I rely upon your punctuality?"

"You may," said Mr. Twill.

Somerville wrung his friend's hand, and returned home. At ten o'clock, he tore himself away from the embrace of his wife, and followed

Mr. Twill into the post-chaise, which rolled away from his door at rapid rate.

Surrounded by luxury, possessed of wealth which was enormous in the eyes of one who lately had wanted bread, the mistress of a splendid establishment, envied and courted by those acquaintances she had formed since her accession to fortune, and far removed above the chances of pecuniary adversity, Eliza was that night the most miserable woman in existence!

CHAPTER XXI.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF AN EMINENT RACE OF MODERN GENTLEMEN.— THE DUEL, AND ITS RESULTS.

THE English at Calais are a remarkably singular race of beings. The generality of them have been obliged to leave their native land for ever, in consequence of the inhumanity of sheriffs' officers and policemen, who would endanger their safeties under the paltry pretexts of debts or rogueries. Arriving in Calais with nothing, they usually possess nothing while they are there, save the bad opinion of the towns-folk—a species of leasehold property which they only abandon with their lives. In their habits they are for the most part hebdomadal—that is to say, weekly clean shirts, weekly objections to pay the bills that pour in, and a dinner once a week. In reference to the replenishment of their wardrobes, they are triennial; but eternity is scarcely an emblem of their predilection for lying. They get up at mid-day, and if they have any breakfast, they eat it; and if not, they hasten to see whether they cannot obtain an invitation to partake of one. Having satisfied their hunger in some way or another—for few of them have any hopes, beyond a halter in England, or the galleys in France, to live upon—they take a walk upon the pier, ogle the fish-girls, watch the steam-boats coming in, laugh at the particulars of the previous night's debauch, and acquire a famous appetite without having exactly made any arrangement for their dinners. This walk brings on three o'clock, and then a lounge on the Grande Place wiles away another hour. There they stand, at the corner of the banker's houses at the bottom of the Rue du Havre, with their hands in their pockets, large clubs under their arms, their hats cocked over their right ears, and probably one with a great coat on in summer, and another with white trousers in winter. There they stand—I say; and there they discuss the scandal of the place—how Miss *Such-an-one* was seen walking late at night in the Basseville with the handsome post-office clerk—how Mrs. *So-and-so* drinks—how Doctor *This* forged a bill upon Mr. Morley the banker—and how Captain *That* winked at his daughter's running away with a very notorious person residing at Brussels.

At four or five o'clock a wretched and cheap English dinner is served up at some low public house, where these gentlemen meet: not that they dine there from preference—but because they cannot obtain credit elsewhere. After dinner, cigars and cold gin-and-water form an elegant and much admired dessert; and when they have smoked and drank

themselves into a state of pleasing excitement, they have recourse to billiards and *écarté*.

Of course there are one or two exceptions to this rule of English character in Calais : but these exceptions consist only of a few individuals who from time to time pass a couple of months in that town. The foregoing sketch applies only to the established residents—men who would get away, if they could—but as they cannot, they are eternal fixtures in a place they detest.

A visitor to Calais, who strolls into the billiard-room at Barry's Albion Hotel, will be highly edified by a phrenological and external study of the inmates. He will see first—a tall, stout, awkwardly made man, without teeth, and possessing a nose broken in the middle. This personage is attired in a shabby blue coat with brass buttons—rusty black trousers—and a very dubious-coloured waistcoat. In winter he is mysteriously wrapt up in a great camlet cloak with a large cape. Secondly, the visitor will observe an old man, with large gold rings on very dirty fingers, attired in a white great coat, and smoking an antique wooden pipe. If this old man should open his mouth to speak, he will make a grunting kind of noise, and declare that he is possessed with devils. A third character may be described as a very stout, middle-aged personage, with a florid complexion, and a gruff voice which he only makes use of to contradict himself. He is invariably followed by a hideous dog, to which his friends have given an opprobrious name, to the great grief of the animal's master. A fourth inmate of this room is a thin, decrepit, miserable old man, tottering upon the verge of the grave, affecting a sanctity which withered debauchees invariably assume, and preaching morality while he lends his money at a most exorbitant and usurious interest. He wears a broad brimmed hat—a red under-waistcoat—a long frock-coat—and a pair of very large shoes. He calls himself a Major—but of what he does not descend to say. Another prominent character in the billiard room is the British Consul—an individual who, on account of his immense liabilities to the French tradesmen, does not dare protect the interests of those of his fellow-countrymen that may require the exercise of his power, and who entrusts all the important business of his office to a miserable urchin whom he delighteth to name his eldest son. Most decidedly this youth is a representative of his sire in a physical point of view; but why the similitude should be extended any farther, we know not. In person the Consul is a short, stout, ill looking man, very pompous in his manners, and as obsequious to his superiors as he is insolent to those whom he deems beneath him.

But the palmy days of Calais are gone by ; and the English, who have any money to spend, prefer the amusements of Boulogne to the recreations of Calais,

It was about half-past two o'clock in the afternoon that the English residents met in the billiard room of the Albion Hotel to divert themselves, it being a rainy day, through the medium of billiards, grog, and scandal. The chief topics of their conversation were, first, the arrival of two very gentlemanly individuals by the Dover packet that morning ; secondly,—the fact that an English surgeon resident in the town had been immediately sent for to the Hotel Rignolle to wait upon the strangers ;—and thirdly, the slight hint which the medical gentleman had given to

two or three of his friends, when he left the hotel, that a duel was about to take place. These circumstances were fine food for the discussion of the English in Calais ; and a high and mighty man was the surgeon in *their* eyes for the time being.

"Well, here we are at last," said Mr. Twill, as he warmed his hands by a cheerful wood fire in a private room at Rignolle's hotel.

"And the most difficult part of our task is accomplished," observed Somerville ; "we are provided with a surgeon. It now remains for you to see Mr. Stanley's friend at Dessin's hotel, and arrange a meeting forthwith."

"In spite of the execrable state of the weather ?" cried Mr. Twill.

"In spite of every obstacle," returned Somerville, quickly.

Mr. Twill enveloped himself in a thick cloak, and guided by a servant, hastened to Dessin's hotel. Having enquired if a gentleman of the name of Stanley were there, he was shown into a spacious apartment, the windows of which looked upon a garden. The writer of these memoirs has not satisfactorily ascertained the nature of the conversation, and the particulars of the interview, which took place between Mr. Twill, Stanley, and the friend who accompanied the latter individual : suffice it to say, that when Mr. Twill left the apartment to return to Somerville, he appeared wrapt up in the most profound meditation, and a cloud overshadowed his brow.

"Well—will he afford me the satisfaction I require ? or does he shrink from the meeting ?" demanded Somerville, as Mr. Twill entered the room in which the former had so anxiously awaited him.

"He is as eager to terminate this business at once, as yourself can be," was the reply. "The rain has ceased to fall with violence : we may at once proceed to the spot which Mr. Stapleton, Stanley's second, has already explained to me. The surgeon has received an intimation to the proper effect."

"In that case, let us lose no time," cried Somerville, putting, with the greatest coolness in the world, a brace of pistols into his pockets.

In three quarters of an hour, they had gained a convenient spot upon the sands between Calais and Gravelines, from whence they obtained a view of the towers of the church, the lighthouse, and the town-hall, as well as of the telegraph, of the former town, in the distance. The rain had by this time altogether ceased ; but a cold wind, blowing direct from the sea, rendered the position of the belligerent parties and their friends anything but pleasant. Somerville and Twill arrived at the spot appointed about five minutes before the other party. Stanley, the surgeon, and Stapleton, however, soon made their appearance ; and the seconds then proceeded to measure the ground and load the pistols.

It was now, when the two individuals chiefly concerned were standing opposite to each other, armed with the instruments of death, that Stanley's cheek waxed slightly pale ; but not through dread of danger. Maybe some gloomy retrospection over certain inauspicious deeds caused that stern countenance to change its colour : maybe, the soul that defied the advance of the Destroyer in the heated moments of peril, shuddered when in cold blood that formidable enemy was seen so near. On the other hand, Somerville maintained the same unruffled look he usually





... in a boat with Bentley

wore : his hand trembled not—his heart beat not with vacillating pulsation—his courage was indubitable !

And now all was ready—the pistols were in the grasp of the opponents—the word was given—their heads were turned away—the weapons were raised—the triggers were drawn—and the report sounded loudly : but both shots were ineffectual. Somerville cast a look upon Stanley ; —that individual was as cool and collected as himself ! With the excitement of the actual crisis, his colour had returned to his cheek ; and he stood firmly, the same undaunted, the same stern being he generally was !

A minute had nearly elapsed in silence after the pistols had been discharged, when Mr. Stapleton stepped forward, drew Mr. Twill aside, and conversed with him in whispers.

"Somerville," said Mr. Twill, when the conference was terminated, "I hope you are now satisfied. Both I and Mr. Stapleton are of course equally averse to the shedding of human blood—particularly when it must flow from courageous men like yourself and your antagonist."

"The blood of one *must flow !*" murmured Somerville, in a hoarse voice : "if you call yourself my friend, proceed with your duty according to my wishes."

"The feelings of a Christian," began Mr. Twill—

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," returned Somerville impatiently.

"That is the horrible law of retaliation established by Moses," observed Mr. Stapleton, who had overheard Somerville's remark.

"And Christ said that he came to preserve, and not to destroy the laws of Moses," abruptly exclaimed Somerville.

"Sir, I must do my duty," said Mr. Twill, after a moment's pause, to Mr. Stapleton : and the seconds slowly proceeded to load the pistols once more.

"Are you ready, gentlemen ?" enquired Stapleton.

"I am," was the answer from each of the principals.

"Then, once—twice—thrice—fire," said Stapleton, marking time with his foot.

The pistols were raised—the report of both re-echoed amongst the sand-hills which skirt the coast—and Stanley fell heavily on the spot where he had stood.

Stapleton rushed forward and caught his friend in his arms ; and in a moment the surgeon was busily employed in examining the wound. The ball had penetrated the left breast, just below the heart.

"Is there any danger ?" asked Mr. Twill in a tone of the deepest anxiety.

"The wound is severe," whispered the surgeon.

"But not absolutely dangerous ?" urged Mr. Twill.

"Very," laconically replied the surgeon ; but he was not overheard by Stanley, who had fainted.

"There is a possibility of cure ?" said Stapleton, with an accent that implied an interrogation.

The surgeon shook his head, to imply that there was no hope.

"Eliza ! thou art avenged !" murmured Somerville, clasping his hands together, and raising his eyes to heaven, as if he were returning

thanks to the Powers above for his own escape, and for the fate of the individual who lay insensible at his feet.

By this time, many of the English gentlemen, whom we have before alluded to, arrived upon the spot ; and by their aid, Stanley was transported to Dessin's hotel, while Somerville and the two seconds proceeded to the town-hall, to render an account of the duel to the commissary of police. That magistrate, having drawn up a *procès verbal* of the transaction, and satisfied himself of the honourable character of the combat, informed them that they must remain in Calais upon *parole* until the *procureur du roi* at Boulogne should have pronounced his opinion of the affair. In the course of a few days they were again summoned to the town-hall, where the commissary of police announced to them their restoration to liberty, the reply of the public minister having been quite satisfactory. Somerville accordingly took advantage of this information to return to England, Messrs. Twill and Stapleton preferring to remain in attendance upon the wounded man, whose life was in a most precarious state.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH THE NARRATIVE TAKES A LEAP OVER SEVERAL YEARS.—
THE FORFARSHIRE STEAM-SHIP.—GRACE DARLING AGAIN.

FLEET and fast is the progress of time ; and though there be occasionally a few long and bitter hours in the lives of men, their march from the cradle to the tomb is as rapid as it is sure. The old man looks back to the deeds of his early day as if the interval were but one of a little space ; and the young man glances forward to the period when he hopes to have secured fortune and happiness, as if he were already entering upon the year in which his dreams are to be realized. But, alas ! their glances must wander over half a century, the former looking retrospectively, and the latter into the womb of the future. The old man is what the young one soon will be ; and the young one is what the other not long since was. Oh ! who shall dare complain of the slow march and the leaden foot of Time ?

The reader will have the kindness to imagine that four years have elapsed since the event which terminated the preceding chapter.

It was on the 5th of September, 1838, that the Forfarshire steam-ship left Hull for Dundee. The weather was threatening and gloomy ; and the aspect of the heavens seemed to announce both wind and rain. The vessel was heavily laden with merchandize : indeed it is to be remarked that this was the largest cargo with which she had ever been freighted. But she spurned the waters of the Humber away from her prow, as though she were a thing of no weight ! There were upwards of seventy passengers on board, many of whom were speedily compelled to take shelter in the cabin against the bitterness of the cold blast, which already began to whistle shrillily through the rigging, while others remained on deck. Amongst the former portion were two gentlemen, one of whom the reader will have no trouble in recognising by the conversation which commenced between them, as soon as they were secure in the comfortable cabin from the coldness of the air. The other was a young man of about

four or five and twenty. A deadly paleness overspread his cheek—grief had left its mark upon his brow, in his eye, on his lip, and in his smile—and his soul appeared to be absorbed in the deepest woe. His figure was genteel, his manners soft and pleasing, and his features far from disagreeable: but the eye of the observer would not notice the comely appearance of that young man; his whole attention would be devoted to the sorrow-stricken aspect of the unhappy youth.

"How cold and cutting was that wind," said the young man, coughing as he spoke. "A long exposure to so pitiless a blast would soon terminate my earthly career! And yet my bodily ills are far outdone by my mental afflictions."

"And I should have suffered in mind, as you have suffered," observed the young man's companion, "had I not for upwards of four years been deluded with the hope that our common enemy was no more. Oh! had I known that he was still a denizen of this world—how bitter, how terrible would have been my sufferings!"

"Do you suppose, Somerville, that your friend Twill lent himself to the imposture?" enquired the young man.

"No—I cannot think so badly of one who, with many failings, has a thousand good qualities," replied Somerville. "Besides—he had no interest in making me a dupe in this matter. He was my second in the duel—I do not believe that he had ever seen the villain Stanley before that eventful day—and he it was who reported to me the news of my foeman's death. That news he had received by letter from Mr. Stapleton."

"It matters but little to our present purpose, whether your friend were a party to the deceit or not," observed the young man carelessly.

"Mordaunt, talk not thus," cried Somerville reproachfully. "I know that he, who was my benefactor in poverty, and who has strenuously refused all assistance from me since I became suddenly rich, would have scorned to practise a cheat upon his friend. Moreover, how noble was his conduct, when he discovered that the unhappy girl, whom that wretch Wokensmithers——"

"Oh! pardon my doubts!" interrupted Mordaunt, for such was the young man's name. "His behaviour in reference to that affair exonerates him from any unjust suspicions."

"Yes," continued Somerville, "he made every exertion to discover the name and condition of poor Maria; and when he found that the monster of a mad-doctor had lent himself to the infernal schemes of the more than monster, Stanley—though ruined in his fortunes, and possessing an opportunity of re-establishing them—he spurned the idea of espousing a woman who claimed relationship with so atrocious a villain. And now that he is rich once more—"

"Ah! never shall I forget the day when I discovered my poor Maria in that infernal den!" said Mordaunt, a terrible scowl passing over his features. "Half-starved, half-naked, raving in a cold shed—Oh! God—how could I support the hideous spectacle! The sister, whom I had so fondly loved—the only relation I had left to me on earth—O Somerville, my own reason totters as my mind contemplates that sad picture!"

"One consolation remains for you, my dear Mordaunt," said Somer-

ville, wiping away a tear from his eye: "your sister has found a companion—a mother—a sister—and a friend in Eliza."

"That is the only consolation which remains to me," exclaimed the young man,—"that—and the prospect of approaching vengeance upon the head of her seducer! Ah!" he added, with a bitter laugh—"the villain vainly attempted to hide himself from me! When, but a few weeks ago, I discovered that the report of his death, in which I also had believed for four long years, was false as his own heart, I speedily tracked him to his usual haunts; and so soon as my vengeance shall be gratified—then may death possess himself of me as soon as he will. That hour cannot be far distant; for God, in his mercy," continued the young man, violently striking his breast with his hand, while his cheeks were suddenly tinged with the hectic glow of consumption, "God has allowed me to know—to calculate—to mark almost to an instant the period of my existence; and though that death will give relief to all my sorrows, still often do I dread its approach, because I cannot combat its advances. Night witnesses my feverish head press a sleepless pillow: the morning finds me less refreshed than when I sought my couch. The moon rolls silently on, and her rays fall upon my burning brow; then the sun rises in glory from the eastern horizon, and his beams only serve to boil my blood, and set my brain on fire. The gay scenes of festivity and mirth seem mockeries of my grief; and solitude renders it more acute by contemplation! Where—where, then, am I happy?"

"Alas! what misery has not that man caused?" murmured Somerville.

"At the age of eighteen I was joyous and happy as one can be who has no cares," proceeded the young man; "and everything seemed to smile upon the dawn of my career in this world. But the seducer came, and plundered me of that treasure of which I was so proud—my young, my beautiful sister—she whom a dying mother had confided to my care—the innocent, the confiding being that I rashly threw in the way of the wretch whom I deemed an honourable man! Oh! the trust reposed in me by my deceased parents, was vilely neglected—and terrible is the retribution that has awaited me!"

"Oh!" thought Somerville within himself, "what could be the villain's feelings, were he to contemplate the wrecks he has made—and chiefly, this young man, so decayed in health, so lost to the whisperings of hope, so deaf to the voice of consolation!"

"But it was strange," observed Mordaunt, after a long pause, "that in the midst of her ravings, the sight of that ring should have worked so sudden and strange an effect. It seemed to dispel the mists which surrounded her memory, to form a focus for the concentration of her wandering ideas, and to enable her to look calmly over the deeds of her former years."

"When chance threw me in your way, Mordaunt," said Somerville—for these two young men conversed together, as if the unburthening their sentiments and feelings to each other, were an essential source of consolation,—"and when I discovered that the unfortunate Maria was your sister, it struck me that Stanley might have been capable of recommending the same means of extermination to her, as he had done—on a like occa-

sion. And I was not mistaken : the sight of the ring produced the effect I anticipated ; it brought a connected history to the young victim's mind—it formed a point to which she could gaze with certainty—and, as I foretold, the very fact of recalling the truth of her sorrows to her mind was the safest method of destroying the delusions of her imagination. She wept plentifully—the tears relieved her—and to that ring may be almost traced her present convalescence."

"And to the kind treatment she experienced at the hands of a female who could appreciate her sufferings," added Mordaunt. "Her mind had been unhinged by the horrible treatment she had experienced at that den of iniquity. Could you believe it possible, that Wokensmithers actually assured his men he was not paid for the poor girl, in order to induce them to treat her with additional cruelty?"

"And yet the Doctor himself confessed to me that Stanley paid him liberally for the maniac," said Somerville, "as he also intended to do for me."

"You will pardon me for intruding so much of my griefs upon you, once more," whispered Mordaunt, after a pause, "but it is sweet to confide in a friend."

"Pardon you, my dear Mordaunt!" exclaimed Somerville. "Are not our sorrows, our vengeance, and our plans, common to both ? and, although our acquaintance has been but of a few weeks' duration, the cause in which we are embarked makes us brothers ! May heaven prevent the possibility of your informant having been misled touching the destination of Stanley!"

"I could scarcely have been mistaken in the means that I adopted to trace him," returned Mordaunt. "The gold, which I lavished upon Wokensmithers, elicited the truth. The Doctor declared that our enemy would remain a few days at Hull, and would thence proceed by land to Dundee, where he has some property."

"You do not imagine that Wokensmithers was deceiving you?" asked Somerville.

"I have no fears on that head," answered Mordaunt: "I threatened him with criminal proceedings, according to the laws of the country, for his horrible treatment of my sister, unless he enabled me to trace out her seducer, the false report of whose death had not reached him. It was fortunate that he was unaware how we had been imposed upon in that respect; it is probable that Stanley would have suffered him to entertain the same error, had he not been obliged to continue his bribes for the custody of my sister. He moreover doubtless found Wokensmithers too necessary an assistant in his atrocious schemes, to wish to get rid of him."

"The cunning invariably over-reach themselves," remarked Somerville: "and this time, he shall not escape!"

The crowded state of the cabin now precluded the possibility of continuing the conversation with any degree of privacy and freedom; Somerville and Mordaunt accordingly sought the deck. It was about twelve o'clock at night, and the sea was far from calm. The foaming crests of the rising billows were even visible through the darkness; and the motion of the vessel began to operate violently upon the passengers. The two young men could not however bear the close atmosphere of the

cabin, although they experienced all the horrors of that dreadful sickness which, when felt for the first time upon the boiling waters, seems the precursor of approaching death. Those individuals who had retired to the cabin, were unable to sleep: every moment their illness increased; and even in the coldest night, the heat was there intense. It was about half past one o'clock, when the captain received the unpleasant news that the boilers were leaky; but he did not apprehend any serious danger; he accordingly ordered the engineers to supply the furnaces with as much coal as possible; and the gallant ship pushed bravely on, furrowing the ocean-foam with her sharply pointed prow. The silence that prevailed upon deck, was only broken by the voice of the captain issuing his orders, the shrill whistling of the wind, the rattling of the cordage, and the flapping of the sails which had been hoisted to steady the vessel. Gloomily the hours passed away—the gale increased towards morning—and the report of the engineers in reference to the boilers, was anything but satisfactory.

When the morning dawned, the prospect was more disheartening still. The dark green billows rolled along the surface of the ocean in boisterous revelry, beating up against the sides of the vessel, and covering the deck with their cold spray. The men were obliged to have recourse to the pumps, which they worked with an energy that drew large drops of perspiration to their foreheads, notwithstanding the piercing chilliness of the air that ushered in the morning. The wind gradually increased in violence, and blew, not with that steadiness which the sailor's skill is enabled to meet, but in long and frequent gusts of intermittent fury. At one moment the ship appeared to be rising to the clouds; at another nought was seen by the individuals on deck save the green billows around them.

And then commenced those anxious and sad questions on the part of the passengers, which only embarrass the hardy sailor, and gather but little hope in reply. A husband was sent by his screaming wife, and a brother by his terrified sister, to ascertain if there were really any danger. Danger! the countenance of the captain could not conceal the misgivings which filled his mind; and the stern and weather-beaten sailors at the helm, or at the pumps, performed their respective duties in silence and with reserve. But that captain and those sailors knew not danger, as those, who were confided to their charge, knew it: they did not actually dread it—they boldly endeavoured to avert its reality. The safety of the vessel and of his crew was the paramount object of the captain's solicitude: the idea of the danger which might menace his own life, separated from the conviction of the common peril which threatened all, never entered the mind of that brave man.

Shortly after day-break a thick mist surrounded the vessel; and then the peril increased. It is even a consolation to gaze upon the danger which menaces us—it is an occupation to calculate the distance it is from us, and the probable moment of encounter. But now a dark gloom surrounded the ship; a few feet away from its sides, the mists and the waters commingled together; and the whole scene appeared like one vast troubled sea, around, about, below, and above. Terrible as is the stormy ocean in the broad glare of day, it is more formidable still when encountered amidst the murkiness of clouds and vapours which obscure

the sight. The horrors and the dangers, that we do not see, are augmented by the terrified imagination ; and the ever fertile fancy of man is more active and industrious in the hour of peril than in the moment of safety.

All was confusion in the after-cabin of the Forfarshire. Sea-sickness and the consciousness of imminent peril produced their sad effects upon every one there ; and the lamentations of despair were strangely commingled with the gurgling sounds of indisposition. Every time the vessel lurched, or pitched headlong from the summit of a mighty billow into the abyss beneath, loud screams, and cries for help, and prayers to heaven, and groans, and the murmurs of pain, echoed through the narrow room, and formed a singular contrast with the wild ravings of the winds and the din of the troubled waters without. And, then, on board of a ship labouring amidst the perils of the storm, there are strange sounds and noises—the cracking of timbers—the play of elastic planks—and that which resembles the crash of the whole frame-work of the vessel, which are not heard elsewhere ; and then the luckless tenant of the fragile bark remembers that there are but a few thin boards between himself and eternity ! A stripe cut from a tree, and a nail, and a copper bolt, alone separate him from the jaws of death !

Somerville and Mordaunt had not left the deck the whole night ; and the cough of the latter was distracting to hear. They scarcely exchanged a word throughout those long and weary hours of storm, of cold, and of danger ; but the idea which occupied the mind of Somerville was the same that filled the imagination of Mordaunt—and that was a hope that their lives might be spared from the fury of the elements, in order to fulfil the task of vengeance which they had imposed upon themselves !

Towards six o'clock in the evening of that terrible day—a day, each minute of which seemed an hour, and each hour a century—the vessel passed the Fern Islands on its progress northward ; and the violent pitching of the ship, as it fought its way through the tumultuous billows which there raged more furiously than elsewhere, made many an one believe on board that his last hour was come. The men were now obliged to work more vigorously at the pumps than they had previously been : the boilers became less serviceable every minute—the mist, the danger, and the storm alike increased !

"Mordaunt," said Somerville, suddenly awaking from a long—long silence, and catching his companion violently by the arm,—“do you notice how the wheels of the vessel beat the water ?”

“I hear nothing definitively,” returned Mordaunt: “there is a strange ringing in my ears, which seems to agitate my brain, but nought besides.”

“There—fainter and slower still!” cried Somerville, convulsively grasping the flesh of Mordaunt’s arm : “they will soon cease to play altogether !”

“What do you allude to ?” demanded Mordaunt impatiently. “Speak, —is all lost ?”

“The machinery is almost powerless,” answered Somerville in a hoarse tone of voice : “the wheels scarcely move now ;—O Go ! they have stopped !”

And as he spoke, the jar occasioned by the motion of the piston rods

and the revolution of the axis of the paddle-wheels, suddenly ceased. Mordaunt then comprehended the full extent of the danger which menaced the ship.

The engineers hurried upon deck, and sought the captain : they conversed in whispers ; and it was evident that the captain urged the engineers to essay their skill once more. But all attempt to render the machinery available was futile : the boilers leaked to such an extent, that the water which oozed from them extinguished the fires in the furnaces, and the engines remained motionless and were now rather incubrances than objects of utility. All that remained to be essayed, was to hoist every sail and let the vessel drift before the wind, which had by this time acquired the violence of the most appalling hurricane.

" Oh ! this is terrible !" cried Somerville, for human nature could scarcely bear up against the horrors of the scene.

" Ought we not to turn to God in an hour like this ?" murmured the wretched Mordaunt.

" Alas ! we shall stand in his presence soon enough now !" returned Somerville ; and Mordaunt's reply was lost in the howl of the winds and the raging of the storm.

Total darkness soon enveloped the ship—the wind shifted—and as she had no longer her paddle-wheels to determine her course, she could not make head against the united fury of the waves and of the blast. She was tossed about at the mercy of both ; and then, when she had veered round, she was carried along in a southerly direction, being the very reverse of that which she ought to have pursued. The sea broke over the ship in mighty billows which threatened to overwhelm her ; and as the dash of each consecutive wave was heard upon the deck, the appalling screams of the passengers in the cabin redoubled. Wet, cold, and miserable, Somerville and Mordaunt persisted in retaining their situations on deck : they idly flattered themselves that there was less danger there than below !

Hour after hour passed away, and no human imagination can conceive the acute anguish and the bitterness of the suspense experienced by nearly all on board. To be snatched from this world, in the midst of darkness and of tempest, and to find a watery grave amongst all the accumulated horrors of shipwreck—Oh ! this was a fate maddening to think of ! No pen can describe the terrors of that long, long night. The morning came—but light dawned not with it—the mists still enveloped the ship in almost impenetrable gloom. It was about four o'clock when breakers were descried a-head.

" Were we we ?" enquired Somerville of the captain.

" Near the Fern Islands," was the answer ; and the captain, who perceived the imminence of the danger which awaited his ship and all its crew, rushed himself to the wheel, and endeavoured to run the vessel into the Fair Way, as the strait between the islands and the mainland is called. But the Forfarshire refused to answer her helm ; and Somerville's anxious and restless eye read the truth on the countenance of the captain.

" Mordaunt, we are lost," he said to his companion : " the rocks and the breakers are under our bows !"

And as those words fell from his lips, the vessel touched the rock !

In another moment a tremendous sea raised her on the crested heads of the furious billows, and when the waves rapidly retreated from under her, she fell upon the rock, her bows striking it with awful violence.

Terrible were the screams, the yells, and the lamentations which now issued from the cabin. All the endearments of those ties which bind its wretched inmates to existence, suddenly rushed upon their minds; and the agonised ebullition of their feelings told their anguish—their deep, bitter, burning anguish—their emotions of agony, of grief, and of despair, but far too well! One or two were asleep; and when the vessel struck, they awoke, and started up, and gazed wildly about them, and asked rapid and incoherent questions, and scarcely comprehended the extent of their peril before they were snatched from their temporary repose to an eternal sleep! Oh! horrible—most horrible was the scene which took place in that cabin, where men felt and knew that they were standing on the threshold of the grave, and that the roaring billows would in a moment wash them from the planks to which they so idly clung, and bear them to the presence of their God!

And, ah! how sad were the last reminiscences of those fated individuals! One remembered his sweet babes, whom he had lately seen reposing on their mother's knees—another thought of his anxious and tender wife—a third called to mind the much-loved parent who depended upon him for support—a fourth raved at the idea of the misery which would overtake the widow and the orphans he should leave behind him! Some rushed into each other's arms—others murmured prayers for that safety which they felt was impossible—a few sank into the deepest apathy—and many fell down upon the floor, the victims of indescribable despair! So wild were the impulses of some—so unnaturally calm the aspect of others—but so terrible the appearance of all, that the inmates of the cabin seemed like an assemblage of maniacs in that moment of terror and of dissolution!

"Let us rush forward, Mordaunt," cried Somerville, suddenly recovering his presence of mind: "the bow is fast upon the rock, and may resist the waves much longer than the after part of the vessel."

But as his companion did not seem to comprehend his directions, Somerville seized him by the arm, and dragged him forward, where they caught hold of the windlass in imitation of the example set them by two or three of the sailors and a few of the passengers.

In the meantime eight or nine of the crew lowered a boat which hung on the quarter, and crowded into it. Already was it upwards of five yards from the ship, when a passenger, prompted by the desperate predicament in which he found himself placed, leapt from the vessel, and succeeded in attaining it. It was a strange species of courage, in the midst of the direst fear, which rendered the effort of this individual effectual; and may he long enjoy the life he so well earned!

Scarcely was the boat twenty yards distant from the ship, when a wave, a mountain high, raised the vessel from the rock, and then hurled it back again with awful violence. A terrible crash was heard—a din, like the breaking of a thousand weighty trees, fell upon the ears of the crew—Somerville turned his head to ascertain what new calamity awaited them—and he saw the entire of the after part of the ship give way, sink backwards, and disappear beneath the mad waves which

seized it as their prey! The stern cabin and all its inmates, including the greater portion of the passengers, with the captain and his wife, were thus suddenly swallowed up by the ruthless and unpitying element! Somerville averted his head from the sad locality where so many of his fellow-creatures had found an awful doom; and his eyes met those of Mordaunt, who had also observed the terrible catastrophe. The two young men spoke not—but they exchanged looks of the most unutterable horror!

Amongst the poorer portion of the passengers, in the fore-cabin of the vessel, was a woman with her two children, the elder, who was a boy, being about seven, and the younger—a girl—five years of age. When the direful news spread throughout the ship, that breakers were perceived a-head, this unhappy mother gave way to the wildest excesses of despair. She clasped her children in her arms, and wept, and sobbed on them as if her heart would break. And they, though scarcely understanding the cause of their parent's distress, mingled their tears with her's, threw their little arms around her neck, and endeavoured to console her. Presently the vessel struck, and the mother and her children united their voices in the loud and long shriek of agony which resounded from one end of the ship to the other. The sea beat into the cabin, and the cold spray lashed over the poor woman and the little ones, whom she vainly essayed to protect from the fury of the billows by enveloping them in her cloak. The other passengers in the fore-cabin rushed upon deck, and she, mechanically following the first impulse of the moment, endeavoured to imitate their example; but she held her two children in her arms—and as she ascended the ladder, the waves beat over her, and threw her back again into the cabin.

"I am very, very cold, mamma," said the little girl, in a plaintive tone of voice which went to the heart of the wretched mother like a drop of molten lead.

The poor woman took a shawl from her neck, and wrapped it round the little sufferer; but the spray continued to beat into the cabin, and all her endeavours to protect her children from its reach were vain. In the midst of her agony, the ship was suddenly raised upon the crest of the billows; and as it descended with terrific violence on the rock, the poor creature was thrown against the sides of the cabin and severely bruised. An awful crash met her ears—she thought that she was about to be engulphed in the deep sea—and while she covered her children with kisses, and murmured prayers to heaven in the wildness of her grief, the after part of the ship was swallowed up, as before related: but she remained safe in the fore-cabin.

Again she endeavoured to ascend the ladder, and again was she driven back by the violence of the waves that broke over the vessel. But it was maddening to remain in that cabin by herself—suspense was more intolerable than the consciousness of the worst—and then the idea struck her that she and her children alone existed upon the wreck. The thought that all had abandoned her in that hour of horror and of distress, armed her with almost superhuman courage; and she succeeded, after a fearful combat with the waves which assailed her, in reaching the top of the ladder. Then what a prospect met her view! A small portion of the ship alone remained—the sea raged in all its fury around—the billows

seemed ready to swallow up the few frail planks which existed upon the rock—and clinging to the windlass were eight or nine pale and ghastly beings, who cried to her to descend again into the cabin, or she would be inevitably swept away by the waves. Oh! all this she saw even in the darkness of the mist; for the white foam of the breakers on the rock, and the straggling beams of morning afforded a species of uncertain lustre, sufficient to enable her to ascertain at one glance the horrors of her position.

At length she listened to those cries, which rose above the din of the warring elements, and returned into the cabin. But the voice of her little girl had ceased to fall upon her ears, and the hands of the child were colder than before. The poor mother shuddered as she pressed her mouth to the lips of her younger offspring—no breath exhaled from between those small pouting lips—the earthly career of the young child was terminated almost before it could be said to have commenced!

And then the boy called to his sister, and endeavoured to whisper words of consolation to his little playmate: but the little playmate returned no answer; and the only echoes to the voice of the affectionate boy, besides the roar of the billows and the whistling of the wind, were the sobs of his mother.

But the sufferings of this poor creature were not yet accomplished. We know not what demon had to be appeased by so much of mortal misery—nor dare we question the inscrutable decrees of Providence, and enquire what enormous crimes that poor woman had been guilty of, thus to experience such unmitigated tortures! Suffice it to say, that when one poor child had fallen a victim to the pitiless pelting of the spray, she fondly clung to the other, and essayed all means within her power to preserve the spark of life which animated her boy. But her attempts were useless—the spirit of the elder child hastened to follow that of his sister; and the bereaved mother sank upon the floor of the cabin in a state of insensibility!

"For God's sake retain your hold, Mordaunt," cried Somerville to his friend, at a moment when he perceived that the unfortunate young invalid had suffered one of his hands to relinquish its grasp of the windlass.

"My strength fails me," returned Mordaunt in a voice that was almost inaudible amidst the din of the waves; "and if succour do not arrive soon —"

Mordaunt was stopped short by a tremendous wave which broke over the ship, and had not Somerville caught him by the arm, he would have been washed away by the receding billow.

The hatch-way of the fore-cabin was close to the windlass; but the waves assailed the ship in such rapid succession, that even to quit his present position for a moment, Somerville saw would be attended with the greatest danger. He, however, perceived that Mordaunt's physical energies were rapidly failing, and that if he were not removed into the cabin, he would be washed away by the sea that rushed over the vessel.

By a desperate exertion, and taking advantage of the moment when a tremendous wave receded from the wreck, Somerville seized Mordaunt in his arms, and rushed with him towards the cabin. The billows

returned with unabated violence—he felt that he was borne off his legs;—with one hand he retained his hold of Mordaunt—with the other he was fortunate enough to seize a rope. The sailors who clung to the windlass, however, gave him and his companion up for lost. Again the waves receded, and Somerville was enabled to convey his friend into the cabin, where a dreadful picture met his glance. The unfortunate mother with her two children, lay motionless on the hard planks. Somerville, imagining that they had bade adieu to the sorrows of this life, and not suspecting for a moment that a spark of existence still animated the bosom of the bereaved woman, deposited Mordaunt in a convenient spot, and returned to the deck, for he preferred gazing upon the perils which surrounded him to seeking an uncertain species of safety in the cabin.

The appearance of the sea was terrific in the extreme. The waves did not appear to follow each other, as if flowing with one common tide, or agitated by the same wind: the vast expanse of waters, as far as the eye could reach beyond the rock, resembled a horrible whirlpool, the moving power of which was far concealed in the depths below. The waves rolled one against another, and occasionally joining their united powers together, broke over the vessel in a large mass, as if they were gifted with sense and animated with the design of destruction. The war of those thousands of thousands of waves, around the wreck,

“ Was like the strife that billows wage,
Where Orinoco, in his pride,
Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
But 'gainst broad ocean wages far
A rival sea of roaring war;
While in ten thousand addies driv'en,
The foaming surges fly to heaven;
And the pale pilot seeks in vain
Where rolls the river, where the main.”*

At about eight o'clock the mists had partially cleared away, and the Fern Light-house was visible from the wreck.

“ Our situation will soon be discovered now,” observed one of the individuals who clung to the windlass.

“ And succour may yet be afforded to us,” said Somerville: “ our case is not hopeless yet!”

“ Provided the planks, which separate us from the sea, will only keep together,” returned the man, with a desponding shake of the head.

“ Heavens! it is—it cannot be a delusion—it is a reality!” exclaimed Somerville: and pointing towards the south-end of the rock, he cried, “ Yes—our prayer has been heard—thank God—we shall yet be saved!”

His companions glanced towards the direction indicated by Somerville, and their joy can be better conceived than described, when they saw a boat approaching the vessel. What to them was now the lashing

* From Sir Walter Scott's “ Rokeby.”

of the waves, and the fury of the billows that rolled over them, since assistance was so nigh ? They burst forth in one loud and long shout of joy : and raising their eyes to heaven, they returned thanks to the God by whom they had ere now feared to have been forsaken !

Nearer and nearer drew the boat. At one moment it was visible on the head of a mighty billow : at another it was snatched from the view of the expectant Somerville and his companions, by the valley of waters into which it fell. And then a sickening sensation seized upon the heart, for fear it should not rise again. But it rose, and seemed to rise upon the waves as if it were an enchanted thing over which the genius of the ocean had no controul !

Nearer and nearer drew the boat. At length it was sufficiently close to enable those on board the wreck to distinguish that it was guided through the foaming deep by an old man and a young girl ! Amazement for some time deprived Somerville of all power of utterance ; and he fancied that he saw a vision. But his companions uttered ejaculations of astonishment, caused by the same object : and then he believed those eyes which he at first was inclined to suspect.

"A woman !" burst from every lip, almost at the same time.

"A woman !" cried Somerville. " Oh ! no—rather say a guardian angel sent to save us ! "

"A woman !" again exclaimed the poor fellows that clung to the windlass ; and at that moment every eye gave vent to tears of gratitude, of joy, and of hope !

O Woman ! thou dearest companion, thou source of every comfort to man in the hour of sorrow, how blessed should be thy name ! Thou, that canst wipe away the tears of anguish, and canst dispel the gloom of care—thou that canst make pleasurable the howling wilderness, and give charms by thy presence to the sandy desarts of Arabia—thou that art all we can look for to solace us in times of suffering and of despair—how manifold are the delights we derive from thee ! O Woman ! fountain of bliss, joy, and happiness to those who walk the self-styled lords of the intelligent and physical world,—Woman, miscalled the guilty souce of a thousand pains and a thousand troubles,—upbraided as the origin of the introduction of evil into society,—what calumniating tongue, what libellous pen first cited thee, innocent and tendering being—delicate reed, doomed to bend beneath a hundred blasts at the caprice of ungrateful man,—what instigated them, who derive all felicity from thee in the moment of despondency, to assert so foul a falsehood, and designate thee as the authoress of their calamities, of eternal woes, of death, of deviation from certain glories attributed to their early existence,—who dares utter so base an accusation in the face of day ? He, who would endeavour to persuade us that thou wast the origin of his ills, might as well essay to preach silence to the waves of the mad ocean —project a journey through infinite space to discover an end—or endeavour to look back through the misty ages of times gone by, in order to find the beginning of eternity, or the primal existence of matter !

Yes—it was true : the boat, which drew near to the wreck, was manned only by a venerable old man and a lovely young girl ! Her delicate hands plied the rude oar with skill and vigour : and ever and anon she turned round her head to glance towards the wreck, as if to ascertain how great a distance lay between her and the

sufferers whom the most unparalleled philanthropy had prompted her to exert herself to save ! Oh ! well might the hearts of the sailors and the surviving passengers have melted, when they found that their cause was espoused by so fair a being !

At length the boat touched the wreck, and Somerville rushed to the bulwarks to aid his deliverers to mount upon the deck. But if his astonishment had been great, when he first discovered that one of those deliverers was a woman, how much more must it have been excited by the sudden recognition of the well-known countenance of Grace Darling ? He again doubted the correctness of his vision and the stability of his own reason ; but his doubts were soon dispelled by Grace herself, who immediately uttered an exclamation which showed that the surprise was mutually felt. Mr. Darling also recognised him whom his daughter had so generously tended some years previously in Saint Paul's Church-yard ; and thus, under the most singular circumstances, was their acquaintance renewed.

" Miss Darling again my saviour !" cried Somerville, and without waiting to receive a reply, he rushed down into the cabin, exclaiming, " Mordaunt ! we are saved ! we are saved ! "

The young man was insensible to the joyful tidings of his friend ; and Somerville hastened to chafe his temples, and use other means to recal him to life. He discovered some spirits in a locker in the cabin, and poured a few drops down his throat. The effects were almost instantaneous : Mordaunt slowly opened his eyes, and in a minute was enabled to understand that succour was nigh.

Grace Darling soon made her appearance in the cabin, for she had heard from one of the men on deck that there was a female below. The two children were quite dead and cold ; but the strenuous exertions of the heroic girl soon brought back to life the before senseless form of the wretched mother. Grace redoubled her attentions ; and in a very short time had the satisfaction of seeing her patient in a state which no longer created any fears concerning her existence.

" We must leave the wreck immediately," said Grace ; " the tide will be flowing fast, and the condition of this female and of your friend, Sir, render any delay in reaching the light-house dangerous in the extreme."

This remark was addressed to Somerville ; and by the aid of the sailors, Mordaunt and the childless woman were conveyed into the boat. The others then stepped in also ; and the bark was shoved away from the wreck. Grace again determined upon taking the oar ; and in spite of Somerville's insisting upon her relinquishing it to him, she carried her resolution into effect.

" Give way," cried the venerable father of the heroic girl ; and the boat again rode triumphantly over the wild waves.

" Shall we save the tide, father?" enquired Grace, surveying the mountainous sea around her with the utmost calmness.

" I hope so," replied Mr. Darling, " but we must pull vigorously."

" Ah ! now I understand the full extent of your noble achievement," said Somerville, addressing himself to Grace Darling. " Had it not been ebb tide, the boat would not have been able to pass between the island and the rock ; and you even dared the danger of being compelled to wait upon the wreck till the ebb again ! "

"We did not think of ourselves," remarked Grace: "we saw the wreck—and that was sufficient!"

It appears that about seven o'clock on that morning Mr. Darling and his daughter, by the aid of powerful glasses, had discovered the Forfarshire lying upon the rock; and the old sailor expressed his sorrow at not being enabled to render the individuals, who might be upon the wreck, the slightest assistance, on account of the fury of the sea. But Grace saw not the foaming billows, and heard not the roar of the breakers: she fancied that there might be some of her fellow-creatures still alive and lingering upon the wreck—she listened not to the remonstrances of prudence—she obeyed only the dictates of her own noble heart—and she fell upon her knees to implore her father to put off to the vessel. He still resisted—but she was inexorable; and as an additional inducement, expressed her determination of accompanying her sire. They descended the stairs of the light-house, they hastened to launch a boat, a task in which the mother cordially assisted! And then that young girl of two-and-twenty seized the oar, and plied it with a vigour which manifested her zeal in the cause of humanity!

A very short time saw the boat reach the strand in safety; and the crew were landed upon the island on which the light-house is built. We leave the reader to imagine the enthusiasm and sincerity with which the individuals thus rescued from the jaws of death, tendered their thanks to the heroic girl and her venerable father for this almost unlooked-for deliverance!

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH THIS TALE IS BROUGHT TO A CONCLUSION.

AT a little distance from the coast of the main-land, and commanding a view of the Fern Islands, was situate the residence of a lady who, since she had dwelt in that spot, was celebrated for her benevolent and charitable actions. Mrs. Maxwell had herself been acquainted with adversity. She had married unhappily—had been treated with the most cruel severity by an unfeeling husband, and had seen the greater portion of the fortune she had brought him squandered away. A separation was mutually agreed upon—a considerable sum of money, competent to produce a more than easy income, was made over to her out of the wreck of her husband's coffers; and on this, having assumed another name, she had lived respected and tranquilly near Sunderland ever since the above-named separation. All, who knew, loved her; she however mingled very little in society; and when she did, her manners were those of an accomplished and elegant lady, who had evidently been well instructed in all the *éiquette* to be observed in the most fashionable circles. Some had ventured to hint that a title was annexed to her name; whether it were true or not, she was as free from pride as her charities were from ostentation. In person she was that which is called a fine woman; her age was but little more than thirty; but care had stamped many premature wrinkles on her brow. She possessed a generous and kind disposition, ever alive to the sufferings of her fellow-creatures—ever ready to assist them to the utmost of her abilities. She

was adored by the peasants in her immediate neighbourhood, and by all the poor fishermen along the coast who had tasted of her bounties.

It was in the house of this lady that Somerville and Mordaunt found a temporary refuge, the increased illness of the latter having precluded the possibility of transporting him to any distance. Mrs. Maxwell, who was intimately acquainted with the Darlings, had heard of the magnanimous efforts of Grace and her father to rescue the shipwrecked individuals, and had immediately dispatched one of her domestics to announce her readiness to afford an asylum to any of the survivors. Mr. Darling had therefore recommended Somerville and Mordaunt to avail themselves of the kind offer, as they were gentlemen and required a superior sort of accommodation, while he took charge of the poorer portion of the crew. The offer of Mrs. Maxwell was gladly accepted by the two young men; and every attention was shown them, in their enfeebled condition, by their generous hostess.

Somerville's first care was to write to his wife, and assure her of the safety of himself and Mordaunt. Eliza and Maria, Mordaunt's sister, both knew that those, whom they esteemed so dearly, were to embark on the preceding Wednesday on board the Forfarshire steam-boat, in consequence of a letter which Somerville had written five minutes before his departure from Hull, to announce that portion of the plan adopted by himself and companion.

The letter, which he now wrote, to inform his wife of his deliverance from shipwreck, only excited instead of allaying the fears which were entertained by Eliza and Maria. It is true, they felt convinced that Somerville was alive; but Maria felt equally persuaded in her own mind that her brother was no more.

"Wherefore has he not written?" said she. "Your husband declares that he is alive, though exceedingly ill and feeble! Oh! this is but an excuse to prepare me for the worst! I know my dear brother would have written a line—a single line—to rid me of alarm and tranquillize me on his account; and I see but too clearly that he is no more!"

It was in vain that Eliza endeavoured to console her young friend; Maria gave way to her sorrow, and accused herself of being the murderer of her brother. Then, suddenly awakening from the delirium of the grief that had seized upon her, she exclaimed, "Eliza—I cannot sleep in peace, till I know the worst! This suspense is intolerable! If you love me—if you call yourself my friend—refuse not the favour I am about to ask of you."

"Speak, Maria," said Eliza; "and if it be within the compass of my small means to afford you consolation, you know I will willingly accede to your wishes."

"Let us fly to the place where your husband is residing," was the immediate answer; "or I shall die of grief."

Eliza suffered herself not to be thus appealed to a second time; the proposition moreover accorded with her own wishes. She was anxious to be near her husband, to minister to him in the enfeebled state to which the late hardships he had experienced, had reduced him; and she accordingly gave orders to prepare for an immediate departure. A post-chaise was speedily procured; and the two ladies travelled day and night till they arrived at the dwelling of Mrs. Maxwell, where they were received the one by a kind husband, and the other by an affectionate brother.

"Ah! my dear Henry," said Maria, when the first ebullition of joy was over, "you will pardon my anxiety; but my fears almost drove me mad."

"And you, on your part, Maria," returned the young man, "must forgive my apparent neglect in not having written to you: but I was ill—very ill."

"Were it not for the kindness of this generous lady," said Somerville, "it might have fared badly with your brother."

"O madam!" ejaculated the grateful Maria; "I shall labour under an eternal obligation to you for having preserved to me the life of one so dear!"

"If I have in any way contributed to your brother's comfort," said Mrs. Maxwell, "I have merely performed a christian duty to a shipwrecked stranger. Alas! I know the value of friendship and of succour in the hour of need—for I have myself deeply tasted of the cup of adversity: and many a time has the amiable Grace Darling soothed my sorrows. But fresh griefs are still in store for me. A letter, which I received from an individual, who was—and is very dear to me," continued Mrs. Maxwell in a voice frequently interrupted by sobs, "leads me to expect him here on particular business this very day: but, alas! it is not aught besides a mercenary view that brings him hither!"

And as the hospitable lady uttered these words, she buried her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly. No one spoke a word—her grief was too sacred to be interrupted by even the syllables of condolence.

The whole party, with the exception of Mordaunt, who lay upon a sofa, was standing at the window which looked upon a lawn before the house. During the pause in the conversation, which the out-pourings of Mrs. Maxwell's grief had occasioned, the garden gate was heard to creak upon its hinges. Maria threw an anxious glance that way, and uttered a loud scream; for her eye encountered the well—Oh! too well-known form of Stanley. The others with one accord instantly looked towards the gate.

"Almighty God!" cried Somerville: "here is the villain I have so long desired to encounter!"—and disengaging himself from the grasp of his almost frantic wife, he rushed out of the room.

"Ah! Stanley—the seducer of my sister!" exclaimed Mordaunt, making a feeble effort to rise; but he fell back exhausted upon the sofa.

Mrs. Maxwell was the last who spoke: her senses almost fled at this unexpected stroke of calamity; and in a moment of inadvertency—the effect of the dreadful shock produced by the ejaculations of the two young men—she told the fatal secret she would willingly have retained in her own breast—"Good heavens! Sir Henry Hunter—my husband!"

"Great God have mercy upon him!" exclaimed Eliza: "he is gone—gone, perhaps, to rush upon destruction!"

Not a word was spoken on either side—they all looked at each other, shook their heads, and appeared to anticipate some deadly result. The state of their minds was more terrible than can be expressed. Grief was dumb—not a tear was shed—not a groan was heard; but despair was painted on every countenance in that room. Neither dared move from the apartment: they seemed rooted by fascination, as it were, to the spot

where they stood. Even Lady Hunter herself was motionless, notwithstanding her husband's life was probably compromised at that very instant.

In the mean time Somerville sallied forth, and confronted Sir Henry Hunter in his path.

"I see, Sir," said he, "that your presence still defiles this earth—still desecrates this world. But no more hearts shall be broken by your turpitude."

"Ah! Somerville!" exclaimed Sir Henry; "and here—at the house of my wife!"

"Your two victims are here also, Sir," returned Somerville in a solemn tone of voice; "Eliza and Maria are both here; and if I fall beneath your hand, there is another,—Mordaunt, the avenging brother,—to cut short your infamous career!"

"Ah! say you so?" cried Hunter. "Then be it as you say. Have you pistols?"

"I have not," replied Somerville; "but I can speedily procure them."

"Here are mine," said Sir Henry. "You may choose the one which you like best. They are both loaded."

"I accept of this," returned Somerville.

"Are we to fight without witnesses?" demanded Hunter.

"There will be none to accuse the survivor of murder!" was Somerville's answer; and they moved farther on, towards the back of the house, where they halted and measured the ground.

The ladies in the parlour had not broken the terrible silence in which we left them: the bosom of each was too full of horror, and too deeply the victim of suspense, to allow the utterance of a syllable. Presently the sound of a pistol alarmed them: they started—and simultaneously uttered a fearful ejaculation. A second report followed, louder than the first; and their hearts sank within them!

A few minutes elapsed—footsteps were heard ascending the staircase; and Somerville, pale, and scarcely able to support himself upon his legs, entered the room, his eyes rolling as if in frenzied horror. He tottered towards a chair, and fell upon it exhausted.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Eliza, springing forward, and seizing him by the hand; "what meant those pistols?"

"Your seducer, Eliza, is no more," returned the young man solemnly; "that villain—I have killed him!"

A dreadful scream issued from the lips of Lady Hunter: and she sank speechless upon the floor.

"Heaven be thanked for one thing!" cried Eliza, gazing devoutly up to heaven.

"Yes—heaven be thanked!" exclaimed Maria: "at all events, *you* are safe!"

"Oh! no," said Somerville, with a bitter smile, laying bare his bosom at the same time, and displaying a deep wound, which had bled internally: "in giving his righteous doom to your seducer, I have myself met death face to face!"

FINIS.

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